



FAMILY WELCOME NOT GUILTY VERDICT IN MANSLAUGHTER TRIAL



Mark Jennens outside court in Wolverhampton

THE family of a man who was found not guilty of killing his mother have welcomed the verdict, saying: "It should never have got this far".

Mark Jennens, aged 40, was on Monday cleared of the manslaughter of his 78-year-old mother Hazel.

Mr Jennens had picked her up by the arms at their home in Sorrel Walk, Brierley Hill, on Christmas Eve, 2015, following a row over the potatoes, before she fell to the ground and broke her hip as he frogmarched her to the door.

But when she died at Russells Hall Hospital on January 20, 2016, from bronchopneumonia, Mr Jennens was charged with her manslaughter. A trial took place at Wolver-

hampton Crown Court last week where the prosecution put forward that the attack was the substantial cause his mother's death.

But after less than an hour and half of deliberation a jury found Mr Jennens not guilty.

Tears

He said afterwards: "It was never the thought of prison that bothered me it was the stigma of being the man that killed his own mother."

There were tears of joy from his family in the public gallery who had stuck by him throughout the criminal investigation.

Mr Jennens' sister Dawn said after the verdict: "The whole family have stuck by

Mark. There was no public interest in this case, it was only going to hurt the family."

Another sister, Tracey, said: "It should never have got this far. There is no blame for Mark, he is as gentle as a lamb."

The court had heard that for more than 10 years Mr Jennens had cared for his mother, who suffered from lung cancer and emphysema.

He had suffered a breakdown in 2015 and sought help from social services to care for Hazel, who he said was a 'difficult' woman who could be 'evil' towards him. But she had refused external support.

On the day of the incident Mr Jennens admitted assaulting his mother following a row about Christmas dinner.

POLICE

Arrest after boy, 8, and mother stabbed

A MAN has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after a woman and her eight-year-old son were stabbed.

Police officers were called to Dudley Road in Himley shortly before 8pm on Sunday. The 30-year-old woman and the boy were taken to Sandwell Hospital for treatment.

Police said their injuries were not believed to be life-threatening. The man arrested remained in custody as investigations continue.

Detective Inspector Alan Lyford said: "I would like to reassure the public that this was not a random attack." Anyone who witnessed the incident or has information is asked to call police on 101.

RETAIL

New shop brings 20 jobs to centre

ART and craft superstore Hobbycraft has opened a new shop at Merry Hill, creating 20 jobs.

The retailer has taken over a unit next to clothes shop Matalan within the centre. Company bosses revealed they had received more than 550 applications for the 20 roles.

The arrival of Hobbycraft comes after it was announced Next would be moving in to the old Sainsbury's store.

FATALITY

Man is released as death not suspicious

THE death of a woman in Dudley, who died from a stab wound, is no longer being treated as suspicious.

Police were called to Hillside Road, Wrens Nest, on July 12 where the 55-year-old woman was found with serious injuries. She died from a single stab wound to the chest. A 65-year-old man was arrested but has since been released without charge.

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BLACK COUNTRY FESTIVAL FUN



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Woman overstayed visa by 20 years and gave false name ASYLUM SEEKER BENEFIT FRAUD

A **GAMBIAN** woman who came to this country under a false name on a six-month visitor visa more than 20 years ago has illegally pocketed more than £70,000 of benefits.

A judge heard that Ramou Jarjusey started calling herself Ndow Rohy Njie and arrived in the UK in 1996 without permission to work or to claim state benefits, during what was supposed to be a short stay.

Nine years later she started claiming working tax credit using her alias. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that she also collected child tax credit.

The Dudley resident reportedly has a grown up child living in Gambia and has given birth to two children since her arrival in England.

Jarjusey created a web of deceit using different names and four dates of birth to illegally accrue £70,696 in benefits between October 2005 to April 2015.

Miss Caroline Harris, prosecuting, said: "She has never been entitled to claim benefits because of her lack of truth about identity and immigration status."

Deportation

Tax credit paid to the defendant under the name of Njie was terminated on April 5, 2015, after officials received information that the person of that name had moved to Denmark. Three months later she applied for the same benefits using her real name and was given a new National Insurance number.

Jarjusey, now 54, also had an asylum application rejected but was granted conditional leave to remain and work in this country until November, when she faces

Report by John Scott

possible deportation. She was arrested in February this year and initially denied the fraud but on May 2 told investigators: 'I want to confess.'

Mr Henry Skudra, defending, said: "Given the complexity of the asylum proceedings she is not entirely sure of the chronology."

Jarjusey, who lives in The Farthings, Dudley, pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining tax credit and was told by Recorder Peter Levins: "You worked in this country without permission and applied for benefits that you were not entitled to because you should not have been here and should not have been working."

She received a 16-month sentence suspended for two years with a three month curfew. She was also ordered to pay a nominal £1,000 in compensation.

Lollipop lady notches up 40 years



Delia Smith has been helping schoolchildren in Wordsley safely cross the road for 40 years

A LOLLIPOP lady who has been helping children get safely across the road for 40 years has been recognised for her long service – and says she has no plans for retiring yet.

Delia Mills first started crossing youngsters over the road outside Belle Vue Primary School in Word-

sley in 1977. Delia, now 74, was initially employed by the police and stayed in post when Dudley Council took over the running of school crossing patrols in 1989.

She said: "I love my job, it's wonderful to see the children every day, they always make me smile."

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: dudley.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Emma Parkes
Tel: 01384 353234
E-mail: emma.parkes@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
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MOTORING: Liz Barratt
Tel: 01384 353244
E-mail: liz.barratt@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
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DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
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Woman's lucky escape caught on CCTV



Lorraine's lucky escape

A WOMAN had a lucky escape after a car ploughed into the bus stop she was sitting at moments after she had stepped away.

Lorraine Alberts, aged 64, had got up from the bus stop near the corner of Brettell Lane and Collis Street to head back into The Starving Rascal pub in Amblecote after smoking a cigarette. Seconds later, a black VW Golf struck the shelter sending shattered glass flying and destroying the frame.

Incredible footage has been released showing the car careering into the shelter.

Her son, Matt Alberts, said: "We had been out enjoying a meal at the pub but I went home about 3.15pm. Then I had a phone call from my mom just after 4.30pm saying she had nearly been run over because this car had just ploughed into the bus shelter. I rushed down there and she was as white as a sheet and in complete shock. She had been sitting there smoking a cigarette at that time when she got up to chuck half of it away. She had just literally avoided being hit by seconds."

Police said the driver had fled the scene and no arrests had yet been made.

Mr Alberts continued: "A police officer commented on how lucky she was and said that she should buy a lottery ticket, but her response was that she has already won the lottery because she is still alive."

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Two cars were involved in the incident but one of the cars smashed into the bus shelter leaving it significantly damaged."

See www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/dudley/stourbridge/2017/07/12/woman-has-lucky-escape-after-car-crashes-outside-pub--watch/

Our long, hard fight for answers not over



Campaigner Greg Stokes who is still fighting for justice over the contaminated blood scandal of the 1970s and 1980s

"IT was the biggest peace-time disaster in the country's history so it's about time there was an inquiry."

These are the words of campaigner Greg Stokes who has fought for justice over the contaminated blood scandal of the 1970s and 1980s which has left 2,400 people dead and many more suffering ill health.

The 62-year-old, who suffers from a clotting factor deficiency, contracted hepatitis C from blood products he was given during treatment in the 1970s.

Mr Stokes welcomed the Prime Minister Theresa May's announcement last week that there would be a wide-ranging inquiry into the treatment of thousands of haemophiliacs and other patients with blood products infected with hepatitis C and HIV.

"It's been a long hard fight to get this inquiry. This wasn't one event, like a fire, this was spread over a number of years and the safety of the haemophilia community was not considered.

Destroyed

"I hope that we find out why the decisions were made to disregard our safety. Documents relating to this were also destroyed, so we need to know who made this decision and why," said Mr Stokes, who lives in Milking Bank, Dudley.

Campaigners have been pressing for years for an inquiry into the importing of the clotting agent Factor VIII from the US. Much of the plasma used to make the product came from donors like prison inmates who sold their blood, which turned out to be infected. Around 4,800 patients are

thought to have been infected with hepatitis C while 1,200 contracted HIV, which can cause Aids. The extent of infection with hepatitis C was not discovered until years later.

It is believed that Mr Stokes contracted the potentially life-threatening virus as early as 1975 but it was not diagnosed until 2001. Since then he has had two courses of treatment with the latter believed to have proven successful.

But it has left him with severe liver

damage and at a higher risk of developing cancer. I'd had it for years without knowing. I had treatment in 2002 and 2012 at the QE Hospital in Birmingham and the second lot is believed to have been successful. But I will be visiting the liver unit in Birmingham for the rest of my life because they have to keep monitoring me because there is a greater statistical probability of me developing liver cancer because I've had hepatitis C.

"At the moment it's what they call

sustained virologic response which means the virus is below detection levels. You can never say you've got rid of it completely," said Mr Stokes, who has published a book on his experience called Last Virion Standing.

He said patients deserved answers and wanted to know why the NHS continued to import blood products from the US after Lord Owen, who as David Owen was health minister at the time, called for the UK to make its own blood products in 1975.

Rail freight hub parks a 'cheap bribe', says Tory MP

KINVER'S MP has labelled proposals to create two parks at a planned rail freight hub in the Staffordshire countryside as a 'cheap bribe'.

South Staffordshire Conservative MP Gavin Williamson, who has a senior party role of Chief Whip, said it would be an 'enormous tragedy' if the 700-acre West Midlands Interchange project at Four Ashes went ahead.

The developer, Four Ashes Ltd, has launched a second consultation on the scheme and say it will create 8,500 jobs and £400 million for the local economy. It has also promised new parks at Croft Lane and off Straight Mile, Calf Heath.

"The park plan is a cheap bribe that no-one will fall for. It is a few crumbs off the table which do not counter the monstrous, detrimental and damaging impact this project will do to our community," said Mr Williamson.

Four Ashes Ltd managing director Peter Frost said independent studies showed the road network can cope with the projected increase in traffic and urged residents to think about the economic benefit.

But Mr Williamson said: "There will be traffic chaos which will bring misery to the residents of South Staffordshire."

Old bank fetches £160k at auction

A FORMER Cradley Heath bank sold for £50,000 more than its guide price at a property auction held at Villa Park.

The empty freehold HSBC bank chambers in High Street sold at £161,000.

Information issued about the building by auctioneers SDL Bigwood said that it was suitable for a continuation of its existing use, but could also be converted into offices or a restaurant, subject to obtaining the planning consents.

The building has a banking court, till area, open-plan office, hall and interview office. On the first floor there are four rooms and a kitchen.

Gurpreet Bassi, partner and head of auctioneers SDL Bigwood, said: "There was a fantastic atmosphere and some really intense bidding on several lots which saw very good prices achieved."

Jobs available at major new store

MORE than 70 jobs are up for grabs at the Mander Centre's Debenhams store, due to open in October.

The 65,000 sq ft store is in the process of recruiting staff. Roles include stockroom and merchandise assistant roles, as well as sales advisors.

Free car park offer across borough is extended

A FREE parking scheme launched in a Black Country borough has been extended by council bosses as they look to bring in more shoppers to town centres.

The two-hour free parking trial ran through May and June.

It was put in place in council-owned car parks in Sedgley, Dudley, Brierley Hill and Halesowen.

It was originally set up to test whether more people would come into town centres and the Conservative-run council is currently studying the feedback to see if the scheme has been successful.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, Dudley Council's cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We have taken the decision to extend the parking trial while we look at the data on car park usage and footfall in the town centres to see what impact this has had on our shopping areas.

Boost

"Some of our residents and traders have suggested that reduced parking charges could help to boost trade and we have listened to those requests," she added. "Anecdotally, people have been very supportive of the parking trial with many traders passing on positive reports from town centres."

For further information on the free parking scheme visit www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/parking-roads

Gateway to stretch of canal by the M5

DOG walkers, cyclists and anglers will be able to walk along a canal towpath after a new gateway was installed under the M5 Oldbury viaduct.

The gate, funded by Highways England, can be used as an entry and exit point on to the nearby Birmingham Canal towpath and Spon Lane in West Bromwich.

A previous route was closed so Highways England stepped in to install the gate so people could get to the towpath again.

Highways England emergency planning officer Frank Bird said: "This means people will now be able to walk their dogs along the canal towpath. Highways England is also committed to try and improve cycle access to routes previously not available."

Delays on road

DELAYS are expected on a route between Stourbridge and Halesowen until next month due to roadworks. A scheme on Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, means signals in place 9.30am to 3.30pm until August 7.

Home install cameras after flower pot thefts



Where have all the flowers gone?

FLOWER pot thieves have been plaguing a Sedgley care home which is now to install CCTV in a bid to catch the culprits.

Ridgeway Court Care Home in Dudley Road has had several flower pots and hanging baskets taken from its driveway. Now management at the home have decided to install cameras to try to catch thieves red-handed.

Bosses say that the flowers are planted as a way to bring colour to the home, as well as being therapeutic for the residents.

Rachael Broadley, deputy manager,

said: "It has happened frequently over the past couple of years and is really getting us down.

"They are targeting the loose hanging baskets and pots outside on the front garden. We have never caught anyone stealing them yet but felt it best to get CCTV put up to try and make it stop.

"How would they feel if it was happening outside of their grandparents' house? This is something that we do to try and make it look nice for the residents. They are restricted to what they can see and love to get involved

planting too. We want to say stop and think - respect your elders."

The thefts have not yet been reported to police but management said that if they catch anyone on CCTV or the problem continues, they will report it.

Iris Worrell, care home manager, added: "It is very disheartening to see this happen. We are a care home, at the heart of the community, and we put heart in everything we do. It is discouraging to see this kind of behaviour."

Man threatened his ex with stun gun and knife

A MAN threatened his former partner with a stun gun and knife, telling her 'I'm going to Taser you'.

Ryan Campbell, aged 24, could not accept that their relationship had broken down when she returned to her parents, taking their children with her.

As a result of his threats and violence he has been jailed for more than a year.

Mr Angus Robertson, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Campbell's ex-partner described him as 'jealous and possessive'.

The defendant started driving up and down Priory Road, Dudley, near the family home and sent his ex abusive messages, which included a threat to kill her, a threat made on February 25.

The following day there was a video message from Campbell in which he said: 'I am coming for you - where are you?'

Punched

A short time later he yelled abuse and hurled the contents of a soft drink bottle at her as she left a shop, continued Mr Robertson.

She ran towards her parents' home but he followed her by car and then cornered her.

She was punched by Campbell who then produced a stun gun, held it just two feet from her body and declared: 'I am going to Taser you'.

When she said she was going to call the police, he ran to his car, took a kitchen knife from the vehicle and threw it towards her.

Two days later Campbell tried to drag her into his car by her hair and spat at his victim, Mr Robertson told the court.

Campbell, now of Beecher Road, Halesowen, handed himself in to police on March 9.

The stun gun was found during a search of his home.

Miss Ellen Shaw, defending, said: "He needs to work on his temper."

Campbell admitted using a firearm with intent, harassment and possession of a bladed article.

He was jailed for 16 months.

Hundreds help make dreams come true



Wolves legend Steve Bull, his daughter Gracie Jo and Dicky Dodd with the Promise Dream walkers at Himley

THEY came in their hundreds. People of all ages but all with the same goal - to raise money for seriously ill children.

Almost 500 people walked the 10-mile route from Himley Hall to Wolverhampton Racecourse as part of Walk For Dreams, held by charity Promise Dreams.

Starting at 11am on Sunday, the fundraisers strode out from the grounds of the hall near Dudley and by 5pm, all had crossed the line at Dunstall, raising thousands of pounds for Promise Dreams, which provides special events for poorly children.

Among the celebrities was

Wolves legend Steve Bull, who, along with his wife Kirsty, has already raised more than £5,000 for the charity.

Radio DJ Dicky Dodd helped with the event build-up, while reality television star Pete Wicks, from The Only Way Is Essex, also took part in the walk.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Building firm hands over centre

A NEW community building at a luxury housing development was officially opened in Sedgley.

Midlands homebuilder, David Wilson Homes Mercia, cut the ribbon at its development in Baggeridge Village development.

The building is in the Baggeridge Country Park beauty spot, next to the development and has been handed over to Staffordshire County Council.

The building is being used as a workshop for the Wolverhampton and District Model Engineering Society, a registered charity which operates a miniature railway in Baggeridge Country Park for visitors.

Council consider election shake-up

A SHAKE-UP of the way council elections are held in Dudley is being proposed to save money.

Dudley Council has put forward plans to hold elections every four years, rather than three out of every four years, with a third of seats contested each time. Under the proposed changes, all 72 seats would be contested next year and again in 2022.

The authority, currently controlled by the Conservatives, said the change would bring greater stability and save £250,000 a year. A consultation has been launched at www.dudley.gov.uk

Flybe in launch of Hamburg service

FLYBE has celebrated the launch of an all-year-round service between Birmingham and Hamburg, the only direct service connecting the UK and Germany's 'second cities'.

Europe's largest independent regional airline, now offers up to four flights a week.

Flybe's other German routes from Birmingham for summer are those to Dusseldorf, Hannover, Berlin and Stuttgart.

Full details of schedules available at www.flybe.com, with a choice of up to four flights a week.

Pub opening after a revamp by new owners

A PUB is re-opening later this month following a refurbishment by the new owners.

The Queen's Head in Enville Street was bought by Pensnett-based Black Country Ales in April.

It will re-open at noon today (Thursday) offering a large and changing range of real ales alongside three permanent BCA beers.

The skittle alley is also to be restored and will be available to hire.

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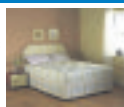
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Wonder twosome set for new album

THE Wonder Stuff's Miles Hunt and Erica Nockalls release their third studio album *We Came Here To Work* in September. The duo returned to their acoustic project after the Stourbridge band marked its 30th anniversary last year with a new album and tour.

Miles said: "As much as I love rocking out with the band, there is a side to me that enjoys a more relaxed approach to making music. Erica and I have been touring as an acoustic duo for 10 years now and we thought it was about time we added some new material to our acoustic arsenal."

They play The Glee Club in Birmingham on October 17.

Six more months for rail operator

A RAIL operator's contract to run services through the Black Country has been extended while Government considers the long-term future of the contract.

London Midland will continue to run the West Midlands Franchise until at least December. It is because the Department for Transport (DfT) is yet to decide on which bidder will take over the franchise for the next 10 years.

London Midland and Abellio, which runs services in Surrey and London, put forward bids. The DfT wants the chosen bidder for the seven-year contract to meet growing demand.

£130 a day to keep youngsters happy

AN average family in the West Midlands spends nearly £130 on every child to keep them happy on holiday, according to a new survey.

Families in the West Midlands are happy to pay an initial £116 per child – and also splash out an extra £12 on additional treats such as sweets and fizzy drinks, bringing the total spend to £128. According to the survey conducted by money saving website Voucherbox.co.uk 51 per cent of families opt for self-catering options.

Veteran rock and roller announces local gigs

VETERAN rock and roll star Joe Brown has announced two gigs in the Midlands for the new year.

The 76-year-old singer and guitarist started out as a stage and television performer in the late 1950s.

He will appear in Brierley Hill Civic Hall on January 31. He also has a solo show, also featuring folk, country and rockabilly songs, at Birmingham Town Hall on November 4.

Row rages over Black Country flag

A HUGE row is raging over the Black Country flag after comments made by Wolverhampton MP Eleanor Smith referring to links with the slave trade.

Tens of thousands of readers leapt to the defence of the flag after our sister paper the Express & Star reported that Ms Smith had refused to be photographed with it because the image of chains had racist overtones.

More than 26,000 people voted in the newspaper's online poll with 95 per cent of them saying the red, white and black flag was not racist.

The newly-elected Wolverhampton

South West MP later denied saying the flag was 'racist' or that it should be 'banned' claiming her views were 'misrepresented'. She said un-named 'constituents' had raised concerns about the flag but admitted she also felt 'uneasy' about it.

She also claimed she had not posed for a flag picture with fellow MPs due to 'parliamentary commitments'.

The Express & Star is standing by comments attributed to Ms Smith that she was concerned about the flag's 'racist connotations' and it should be 'changed' for one that 'rep-

resents us all as a collective rainbow of people'. Editor Keith Harrison said he had received no complaint from Ms Smith about the story and he was confident of its accuracy.

Ms Smith said: "I talked about some concerns raised by my constituents about the flag – specifically the image of a chain, because of their historical use in the Slave Trade. I was uneasy about this image becoming the brand for the Black Country, on the grounds that it associates the Black Country with heritage industries, rather than modern ones. I did not say the flag

was racist. Neither did I say it should be banned. My views on this matter have been misrepresented."

Wolverhampton's left-wing Momentum group backed Ms Smith and said: "The reality that the chains made in the Black Country were used in the genocide that was the Transatlantic slave trade is not something we should hide behind talk of the glories of industrialisation and engineering."

"We call for the withdrawal of the flag and for a committee representative of the diversity of the Black Country today to be established."

Party time! Festival reaches fever pitch

By Robert Cox

'I'M proud to be a yam yam – it's bostin' ay it.'

That was the mood across the Black Country over the weekend as thousands attended Black Country Festival celebrations.

The month-long festival's flagship fun day was held in the heart of Dudley on Saturday. The town centre around Stone Street Square was packed with families out to enjoy themselves.

Highlights included live wrestling, live music, a classic car display and a giant Black Country deckchair on which to be photographed. There was a comedy gala at Brierley Hill Civic Hall headlined by Geordie guest Ross Noble.

Broadcaster Billy Spakemon, who helps organise the festival, said: "The whole day gelled and brought the community together which is so important with everything going on at the moment in the world."

Pride

"There is a resurgence in the pride in who we are and the way we speak."

Among those who paid a visit was Dudley North MP, Ian Austin. He said: "There are lots of place around which claim to have started the Industrial Revolution but the truth is that it started here in Dudley."

Elsewhere across the borough of Dudley, the Black Country Living Museum hosted a 1940s weekend.

There was a 'teenage market' at Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley, itself a symbol of the industrial revolution. Wordsley held a carnival at King George V Park while at Wolverhampton's West Park there was a 'festa' featuring monster trucks. There were events in Old Hill and Wednesbury.



Joanne Riley from Bilston and Willenhall Lions gets into the spirit of the event



Crowds at the Black Country Living Museum



Pat Dudley and daughter Karen with their flag

Chamber aim to 'Get the Midlands moving'

A MAJOR new transport campaign to 'Get the Midlands moving' has been unveiled by the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.

Scores of business leaders attended a breakfast launch event at The Hawthorns, in West Bromwich, as the Chamber set out its campaign, which aims to raise the awareness and profile of transport and infrastructure issues in the Black Country on a national scale.

Five key areas that have been identified for the campaign that the Black Country Chamber wants to see action on: equal investment in infrastructure compared to other regions; better usage of the M6 Toll; greater investment in broadband infrastructure; support for HGV driver recruitment; and increased capacity for Birmingham Airport.

Heart

Corin Crane, chamber chief executive, said: "The West Midlands is the heart of the UK, linking north and south, and the Black Country is essential to the success of the region."

"We produce vital products that are then distributed across the country and around the world, so a first-class transport and infrastructure base is key to the prosperity of the region."

"We have identified key areas where we believe we can help to influence change or raise the profile of the issue so that the Black Country can be competitive on an international scale. This is now the time for businesses to get involved and work with us to get the Midlands moving."

Metro extension road chaos fear

TRAFFIC diversions will be in place for five months on a main city centre route as the next phase starts on the £15 million Midland Metro extension.

There will be lane restrictions in Wolverhampton city centre along Bilston Street up to Market Street.

It comes amid warnings of traffic misery on the city's roads, as work starts on the scheme to extend the existing Metro line to Wolverhampton's railway station.

The line is currently closed between the A41 Bilston Road stop Priestfield and Wolverhampton St Georges for tram track maintenance, which traders say has left them fearing for their livelihoods.

Bosses say that for the next five months there will be 'some lane restrictions' in place on Bilston Street.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Dodgems and big wheel at Brier Fair

DODGEM cars, a big wheel and a retro rollercoaster will be among the rides in Brierley Hill town centre on Saturday when the Brier Fair is held as part of the Black Country Festival. The funfair in High Street and Pearson Street will include traditional funfair favourites along with a giant sandpit and water games at the Moor Shopping Centre.

There will be market stalls, children's entertainment and street performers.

The fair will run from 9am to 5pm. Buses will continue to diverted bus stops and free parking will be available at the Moor Shopping Centre.

Special brew will celebrate novel

A FANTASY author will be brewing a special real ale to mark the launch of latest novel with the help of a Dudley brewery later this year.

Stephen Aryan, author of the popular Age of Darkness trilogy, is teaming up with Fownes Brewery in Upper Gornal to create a bottled beer to mark the publication of new novel, Mageborn. The West Midlands-based author's novel is the first of a new trilogy called Age of Dread and is published in October. He chose Fownes because brothers Tom and James Fownes share his love of fantasy.

Helping with dementia care

A VINTAGE memorabilia fair helped raise more than £2,000 for people living with dementia.

The Stourbridge Vintage Collectors and Memorabilia Fair at the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge, was organised by businessman Jim Cadman and his wife, Pat.

It raised £2,140 for the Alzheimer's Society to support local services, research and campaigning for people living with dementia. Mr Cadman said: "It has been a pleasure working with the dedicated people who look after those living with dementia."

Teenager arrested during drug raids

A MAN from Dudley was one of three people arrested after cash and suspected Class A drugs were discovered during raids in Shrewsbury.

Police executed a warrant at three addresses in the Ditherington area of the town last week, recovering over £1,000 cash, suspected drugs and associated paraphernalia. The 19-year-old has been arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to supply cocaine and bailed to August 8.

Machete and cosh seized by police in school shock

A FOOT-LONG machete and a wooden cosh were seized at a Dudley school during a police blitz which saw arrests made around the Black Country.

From suspected armed robbers, drug dealers and burglars to people breaking curfews – scores of offenders were detained during a 24-hour crack-down, which saw police cells filled up.

Officers from West Midlands Police were up at the crack of dawn on July 11 knocking on the doors of people while force drones were even deployed to hunt for perpetrators.

Officers posted regular updates on social media confirming the latest arrest using the hashtag #wmpgoing-out.

One of the most serious incidents was reported in Dudley where a boy allegedly had a large machete and a wooden cosh at Castle High School.

Staff at the school called police just before 3.30pm last Tuesday as they believed a pupil had a weapon on the premises. A teenager was arrested on suspicion of possession of a prohibited weapon and a machete and wooden cosh seized. He has been released from custody pending further investigation.

Headteacher Michelle King added: "We called the police and the student was removed from the school. We have a zero tolerance policy on anyone bringing in weapons or possessing a weapon."

Churches love town at festival in park

CHURCHES in the Black Country have organised a free community festival at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge this weekend.

The 'Love Stourbridge' will be held on Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday will see with a community fun day from 11am to 5pm, featuring a free climbing wall, craft activities, games, kite-making, sports, face-painting and hair-braiding. From 7pm to 9pm, a barbecue will be held, with live music from Madness tribute act Prone 2 Madness.

On Sunday at 11am there will be church service in the park and live music, followed by a community picnic at 12.30pm. The weekend will end with a performance at 2.30pm by the BJ Concert Band.

Fashion shop shuts

BELEAGUERED fashion chain Store Twenty One has collapsed into compulsory liquidation, which means the closure of Store Twenty One's remaining 122 sites, including the branch at the Trident Centre, Dudley.

Taxi driver fears for future after attack



Taxi driver Ishfaq Hussain's injuries

A TAXI driver has been left fearing for his future after he was attacked in his cab in Kingswinford.

Ishfaq Hussain, aged 38, was left with serious facial injuries after the assault when he was picking up a fare.

The father-of-four from Brierley Hill picked up a woman in Kidderminster Road at about 10.30pm on Saturday. The woman jumped into his taxi but was closely followed by a man, who attacked Mr Hussain.

Shaz Saleem, chairman of the Dudley Private Hire Taxi Association, said: "A woman jumped in to his taxi

and said 'let's go, let's go'. Then as he set the car up to move within 10 seconds a guy came and said 'where do you think you're going' then they next thing he got punched. He can't remember anything after that."

Mr Saleem added: "His vision has been affected which is the worrying thing at the moment, especially as it's one of the most important things for his work."

"He's been told he can't drive for the immediate future and there's no timescale on it, so that's a big concern."

Mr Hussain was taken to Russells Hall Hospital and was discharged the next day.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Police were alerted at around 10.30pm on July 8 to an assault on a taxi driver in Kidderminster Road, Kingswinford."

"It's understood a woman was trying to leave the scene of a domestic argument and when her partner tried to pull her from the taxi a fight broke out between the man and the driver. Inquiries are under way to trace the offender."

Elderly day centre is set to close after 24 years

A POPULAR day centre which supports dozens of local elderly people will close this summer after more than 20 years.

Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen is set to close its day care centre based at the Mary Stevens Resource Centre in Oldswinford after losing vital funding earlier this year. Bosses say the decision will see seven members of staff facing redundancy.

However, existing clients who attend the facility, which has been going for 24 years, will be offered the chance to enjoy day care at the charity's Green Lane centre in Blackheath.

Chief officer Dionne Legge explained: "The loss of funding has really effected us as we lost our grant at the beginning of the year which was a blow."

"This has been an incredibly sad and hard decision to make but we do have another day centre which is based in Green Lane, where clients will be able to phone Ring and Ride in order to get there."

"We have around 25 clients a day, some use it five days a week or just once a week."

The charity was hit badly by the loss of its annual authority grant, which took effect from April 1 this year.

Pay

In previous years the charity had also been allowed to use the centre free of charge but Dudley Council announced earlier this year that groups and organisations using the building would have to pay.

Dionne added: "It has been tough all round for us and ultimately it will probably cost the council more in the long-run than us losing the grant."

"But we want to reiterate to our clients that they will not be left alone from this and we will continue to do our best for them. Over the past few years there are so many charity groups who have lost vital funding across the borough. It is such a shame."

The centre is set to hold their final session on September 1.

Bowled over by effort for James



Among those on the team were, from left, Chris Beardsmore, Marc Couget, Beth Moseley and Charlotte Wilcox

A 24-hour bowlathon has raised more than £1,300 for a seven-year-old with cerebral palsy.

Staff at Tenpin Bowling in Dudley decided to take on the 24-hour challenge after hearing of the plight of seven-year-old James Downing from Rowley Regis.

The toddler suffers from cere-

bral palsy and his dream in life is to have life-changing treatment, which seven members of staff from the bowling alley were raising money towards.

The team started at 9am on Monday of last week and finished at 9am on the Tuesday. Eighteen-year-old Liam Bolton, one of those

taking part in the challenge, said: "It is probably one of the hardest things I have ever done. Until 2am it was fine but after that agony does not even describe it."

So far nearly £48,000 has been raised, to help visit www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/just4children/jamessdream

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Mess of messages with host of posters

IT'S great to see that the Wolverhampton Fiesta is back in rude health once more, attracting thousands of visitors to the city's West Park and evoking memories of the huge crowds during the sizzling hot summers during the 1970s.

How sad then, that an event which has the potential to do so much for the area, should be promoted in such an anti-social manner. Walking around Dudley last week, I noticed that practically every empty shop unit in Dudley – and yes, there are plenty of them – has been daubed with unsightly fly-posters promoting the Fiesta.

To be fair, it's not just the Fiesta, there are also posters for wrestling matches, funfairs and other events, but I would have expected better from the Wolverhampton Fiesta, a prestigious event to fly the flag for the area.

Of course, it may well be an external promoter which is responsible for this eyesore, without the knowledge of the event organisers. If so, I hope they will (a) think again about who they do business with in future, and (b) make sure the posters are removed immediately.

At a time when our town centres are struggling so hard for survival, the very last thing they need is scruffy, fading posters peeling from the windows of empty properties for months on end. And it is no good our councils spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on cosmetic improvements to our towns when they are being ruined by this hideous eyesore.

BEWARE, Big Brother is watching you. According to consumer watchdog group Which?, the growing number of internet connected devices around our homes makes us more vulnerable than ever of being spied on.

One of the devices said to be particularly vulnerable is the i-Kettle, which begs the question of why you would want your kettle connected up to the worldwide web in the first place. Apparently, the main benefit is that you can use your mobile phone to boil the kettle from the comfort of your own bed, although the flaw in the system is that you then have to go to the kitchen to actually make your cuppa. And of course drink it.

But that's nothing. There is now such as a smart toilet, which means that even people's ablutions are now linked up to the information super-highway. Or too-much-information super-highway as I'm feeling inclined to call it.

The mind boggles at why the Russian baddies would want to hack into that.

Irritating modern language quirks are just not tennis



Johanna Konta, who is known for her perfect English as well as her tennis exploits



One man on a boat – Rory McCann, who is Sandor "The Hound" Clegane in G.O.T.



So, Jeremy Vine is really fed-up of using a particular word at the start of a sentence

Jo's lovely English is certainly not a racket

A READER asks after my recent item on the Cornish Republican Army (CRA), what initials would the CRA use if it had a Provisional wing? No prizes.

JOHANNA Konta plays a great game of tennis. But I'm just as impressed with her spoken English. In an age of lazy, grunting, consonant-dropping Estuary English where the phrase "Do you know what I mean?" is usually truncated to "jinamin?" Konta is a beacon of clarity. Born in Australia to Hungarian parents, she proper speaks the Queen's English

AS the seventh season of Game of Thrones kicks off on Sky, I am reminded of a sunny day in Scotland a few months ago. I was waiting for a ferry to a remote island when I was joined at the slipway by the most handsome man I have ever beheld. He was tall, dark and designer-stubbled and he spoke with a gentle Scottish accent as he offered me a lift across. The crossing took about 20 minutes and as his battered old boat pop-popped along, we got chatting. He said, in a smiling, self-mocking way, that he was an actor "from time to time." Anyway, long story short, he turned out to be Rory McCann, better known to Thrones fans as the tormented and hate-driven Sandor "The Hound" Clegane. On the screen, a mass killer with his axe dripping with entrails. In real life, a nice bloke.

SO farewell, at least for the time being, to Doctor Who and those weekly encounters with time-bending travel. Strange to report, but real life has its share of wormholes and time-slips.

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



Take the curious fact that we are preparing for Mrs Rhodes's 37th birthday at the weekend, even though I could swear we met 45 years ago.

A READER admits she's alarmed at my recent item on "toilet plumes" which, according to new research, can spread microscopic faecal particles up to 15 feet, unless you close the lid before flushing. Her problem is that her backyard WC has no lid, and what can I advise? A 16-foot pole and some running shoes.

THE Lake District has been awarded Unesco World Heritage status. So that's more tourists, more litter, more cars crawling through Ambleside and along Windermere. Just what it needs, eh? I know and love a particularly beautiful part of England. It rarely appears in the guide books and it would never dream, I hope, of applying for World Heritage status. Years ago, a friend who is a countryside writer was invited to write about his favourite places in England. He produced the book but kept his really favourite places out of it. There is a lot to be said for keeping secrets secret.

MORE on the theme of holiday-envy. A reader told one of her friends she'd be taking a month-long break in the United States. The response

was: "Well, you're lucky. I only had a week in Paignton." So good holidays are a matter of luck, are they? My reader takes the view that the harder she works, the luckier she gets.

IN any case, you don't have to cross the Atlantic to have a great holiday. I have a friend who has travelled the world and over the past few months has visited Japan and South America. She gets ridiculously excited about her annual week at Corfe Castle.

COLOUR TV was launched 50 years ago this month. One reader is reminded of his first encounter with the technology. He was at university and he recalls the "great excitement" as he and his fellow students prepared to watch international rugby in colour for the first time. What dazzling new dimension would colour bring to the game? Not much. The competing sides were England (all white) v New Zealand (all black).

JEREMY Vine says anyone starting a sentence with the word 'So . . .' should be given a fixed penalty notice. He has a point. The 'So . . .' epidemic infests every media interview. I have no idea where it came from or what the 'So . . .' brigade thinks it adds to the conversation. But I suspect that every generation has its opening line which in time makes way for something new. Back in the 1960s, one particular opener became so commonplace, and so damn irritating, that Monty Python gave us John Cleese as a spokesman for the British Well Basically Club. And what did Cleese tell us? Well, basically . . .

TALKING POINT



Stress in store will put you off your trolley

FOR many years the big high street names have been battling for our custom.

It's been buy one, get one free on this; take advantage of three for two on that (while stocks last, of course); and don't forget the larger size works out cheaper.

No wonder that when faced with the mind-boggling sums we're expected to work out while blocking the supermarket aisles, many shoppers have tried to weigh up whether it is better to give up, go home and give in to internet shopping.

And no wonder there is so much tension these days, what with getting to the shops, finding what you want, working out which is the fastest-moving checkout queue, and then . . . and then preparing for the inquisition.

You know how it goes. "Hi, all right?" is usually the checkout operative's opening move. Before you've had chance to reply, you're hit with "Do you need a bag?", "Have you got a loyalty/bonus card?", "Did you find what you were looking for today?", and finally "Can I interest you in our special offer of a bottle of water/bar of chocolate?" Fumbling around for something, anything, with which to pay, it's that second question, about the loyalty/bonus card that plays on the mind.

Is it really worth searching for said card in your purse, wallet, pocket or bag when you have so many of the damn things and that queue is stretching halfway across the shop? Of course it is, you tell yourself.

So, is there an answer to all this hassle? Maybe, but it will take a fair amount of work by the retailers. Like so many ideas, it came to me while waiting in a checkout queue – thumbprint recognition.

I've lost count of the number of cards I've had stamped or scanned in supermarkets, pubs and coffee shops, often with barely visible ink, or so smudged that the next stamp threatens to merge into one great blob.

The technology is already there to enable smartphones to be unlocked by a unique user, and an increasing number of people are willing to go contactless at the point of payment. Imagine being able to clock up bonus points or take a step towards a free cup of coffee in such a quick and efficient way.

Yes there would be the usual stumbling blocks of data protection, identity theft and the cost of installing the equipment but the digital age is advancing at such a ferocious pace that I'm sure everything could be in place for Christmas, and let's face it, what better incentive is there for the shops to get even more of us spending more, at their busiest time of the year.

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Time to listen to the anger over austerity

SO there we have it! The Government listen, they applaud the work, dedication, bravery of the emergency services, they say they are listening but they are not hearing. I suggest they remove the builder's ear defenders and then they will hear the anger and discord this Government is causing.

What MP works seven days a week on a 24-hour system? What MP attends the aftermath of tragic incidents and deals with the terrible sights all our services have to deal with? What MP is spat upon, assaulted, abused? What MP goes to an incident on their own not knowing what they will be met with? What MP sees and deals with unbelievable sights at our A&Es or the scenes of horrendous fires? However,

all MPs did get 10 per cent wage increases, housing benefits, expenses of all sorts.

So now we all know just how much this Government appreciates all our public sector workers but I would like to know where the unions are in all this furore, aren't they there to protect and fight for workers' rights?

Oh sorry, I forgot successive governments have placed legal strangleholds upon them making them powerless.

So Mr and Mrs MP don't worry, you who receive £70,000, but fear not, the working class will keep you living in the style you have become accustomed to. I just ask that you supply a flat cloth cap to all, so that when you drive or walk by we can all doff the cap and bow

our heads and perhaps you may throw us some scraps.

I often wonder what has happened to the British spirit? When Maggie introduced the dreaded poll tax this nation was in uproar and it forced the then Government to abolish it, but now we have had austerity for over seven years, introduction of food banks because people cannot afford to buy food, cuts to all services, cuts to all types of benefits, the young and old targeted in one way or another, and yet we keep on being trampled upon and the Government just keep stamping harder and harder. We are treated and spoken to like fools.

PETE LOWE
Brierley Hill

Thatcher is not worthy of statue

I AGREE with the sentiment that a proposed statue for Margaret Thatcher should be cancelled because of the possibility of vandalism. Margaret Thatcher was a divisive politician who, through her policies, caused tremendous hardship for millions.

This period of our history was dominated by a selfish unfeeling uncaring elite who had no thought for the less well off in society. Many communities in our country were torn apart through her policies, millions of lives blighted, dreams and hopes destroyed. To me and many others Mrs Thatcher was the unacceptable face of capitalism.

So it is my belief we should not put up a statue to this woman, we should only honour people who deserve to be honoured.

JOHN GREEN
Sedgley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Let the trees do their work to clean our air

THERE is a lot of publicity about the harmful emissions from diesel vehicles that the 'powers that be' are crying about - particularly in towns/cities. But what about the thousands of motorists in rural areas? These people put out the same pollutants, but surely these are absorbed by the benefits of trees breathing in toxins, and breathing out pure oxygen. Many years ago, my father used to work with Jack Holden, who was a long distance runner. Jack used to run in the Millennium Woods so that he could breathe oxygen. Trees were planted in cities so they could do their work. Before the do-gooders opened their mouths.

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

A 'goosey' Brexit is mockery

I'VE listened to the political elite, watched the business tycoons, read the editorials, and now we see the negotiations, and all I see is a goosey Brexit, full of compromise and stitch-ups.

What we voted for seems to have become lost in a mist of political spin. We voted for a stop on uncontrolled immigration, we told the Government we want control of our borders, we wanted foreign criminals deported, and our sovereignty back, and the right to free trade agreements.

Yet it seems one by one what we voted for is being eroded into a mushy mish-mash of patched-up compromises, and a Brexit that will betray the trust of the British people and bring mockery to the whole democratic process.

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Clever pupils scoop maths challenge



Pupils from Quarry Bank Primary School won Dudley Intermaths Championship after beating competition from 40 schools

It was an equation that equalled success as children won a prestigious competition testing their maths skills.

The Quarry Bank youngsters triumphed in the Dudley Intermaths Championship after beating competition from 40 schools and 250 children. They had to battle it out in a series of challenges, which tested their understanding of shapes, time and skills.

The competition, in its third year, took place last month with a special assembly and trophy presentation held for the winners this month.

School improvement advisors Helen Owens and Darren Walter organised the competition. Helen said: "We're so proud of the school, the staff, children and parents that took part and supported the competition."

Thief jailed after snatching cash

A THIEF has been locked up for more than two years after two raids that led to shaken shop assistants quitting their jobs.

Mark Taylor struck at the One Stop convenience store in Throne Road, Rowley Regis, on May 1.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that the 53-year-old bought a chocolate bar and then grabbed £300 from the till while waiting for his change.

Miss Joanne Barker, prosecuting, said that the next day he did the same at the chain's branch in Dudley Port, this time escaping with £150 after a short struggle during which the cashier managed to jam his hand in the till.

Taylor was recognised on CCTV footage of the incidents and arrested on May 3. He said the stolen money had been spent on cocaine but insisted he was not a drug addict.

The two shop assistants serving him when the money was stolen were both so shaken by the experience that they

handed in their notice, added Miss Barker.

Mr Christopher O'Gorman, defending, said Taylor, of Grange Road, West Bromwich, had 'turned his back on everything that had been good in his life' after losing contact with his children following the collapse of his second marriage.

The defendant, who had 21 previous convictions involving 40 separate offences, admitted the two thefts and was sent to prison for two years four months.

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Festive design earns the royal stamp of approval

A FESTIVE scene by a schoolgirl from Dudley will be on millions of Christmas card envelopes after winning a competition to design one of the UK's official stamps.

Ten-year-old Arwen Wilson is one of two winners in a national Christmas stamp contest with her design picked by Prince Charles and approved by The Queen.

St Chad's Catholic Primary pupil Arwen's design - Snow Family - will feature on the 2nd class Christmas stamp. The 1st class stamp will use a design by Ted Lewis-Clark from Somerset. Both Arwen and Ted will be presented with a framed set of their stamp designs by Prince Charles.

A special postmark will also feature on mail delivered to addresses nationwide.



Arwen Wilson is making her mark on Christmas with her snowman family design

Pudding

Each child will have their name on the postmark for a week in November. Arwen's postmarks will feature on mail delivered from November 14.

Geoff Braden, of Royal Mail, one of the regional judges, said of Arwen's design: "I particularly like the Christmas pudding and the mischievous snowman with the snowballs."

Royal Mail chief executive officer Moya Greene said: "We received a phenomenal response to our Christmas stamp design competition this year with over 200,000 entries from children across the UK."

It is only the fourth time in the Royal Mail's 500-year history that children have designed Christmas stamps. The winners both won £1,000 in vouchers and £1,000 for their schools. Other Christmas stamps for different postal rates, and a religious-themed issue, will be available from November 7.



Arwen's design - Snow Family - will be on the nation's second class stamps

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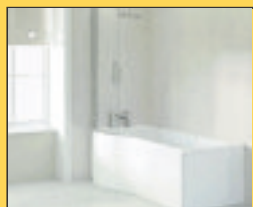


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Zoo's new den will be perfect spot for leopards

CONSTRUCTION work on a £100,000 revamp of the snow leopard enclosure at Dudley Zoo will begin within weeks after planning permission was granted.

Director Derek Grove has been given the go-ahead to start the improvement project, which was one of six unveiled at the start of the year.

The size of the enclosure will be doubled to give the animals more space and visitors better views of the big cats.

Money for the scheme was generated through fundraising during 2016 and it will include an extension to the outdoor facilities, as well as new glass viewing areas and platforms for the snow leopards.

Enclosure

Mr Grove welcomed the latest boost for the zoo and said he hoped that work would start on the leopard enclosure within the next few weeks.

He said: "Visitors will have views of the enclosure from a higher level. If a snow leopard is asleep four metres up on a shelf, it can be very difficult for people to see them."

"We want to make sure that visitors can have good views of the leopards even when they are up high and the leopards can still benefit from being up high which is where they like to be."

"It's about trying to get the balance right for both the animals and the visitors. The leopards will have more room to move around the enclosure and we will be able to make it more complex for them," he added.

It comes as work continues on building a new barn in the farmyard to



Dudley Zoo director Derek Grove looks at a picture of the snow leopard enclosure

provide youngsters with more opportunities to get closer to the animals.

It will also allow the zoo to expand its education sessions, with the space for a teaching area and bosses will be adding a conservation corner which aims to highlight all animal projects and awareness weeks.

Work on another of this year's improvement projects has already been

completed. Staff have demolished the former Geoffroy's cat enclosure to make way for a bigger internal den for the Carpathian lynx at a cost of £25,000, which includes climbing frames and a new viewing area.

Meanwhile the zoo has launched an £800,000 fundraising campaign for an outdoor enclosure for the critically endangered Bornean orangutans.

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Housing on way in 'garden city' move

HUNDREDS of homes will be built and improvements made to road and rail infrastructure as part of multi-million pound plan to create a 'garden city' in the Black Country.

Canalside developments and transformation of former industrial sites form ambitious proposals for a huge regeneration of the Dudley Port area.

Dudley Port train station would receive significant investment to become a transport interchange, combining train, metro and rail services. Bus lanes and cycle lanes would also be added to main roads under the plans.

A blueprint for the future of the area has been revealed by Sandwell Council, which includes sites for more than 600 homes, including a canalside residential development at Lower City Road.

Transport chiefs are also keen to bring in bus lanes along the A461 Dudley Port and cycle lanes on both Dudley Port and Birmingham Road. Canal towpaths would also be improved.

The area was earmarked last year for possible garden city development in a bid to meet the huge demand for housing in the Black Country. The report can be viewed and commented on at www.sandwell.gov.uk/dudleyport

Jasper postpones tour due to heart op



Jasper Carrott due to have heart bypass surgery next month

COMEDIAN Jasper Carrott has postponed his tour after revealing that he needs major surgery.

The Birmingham star has halted his tour because he requires a heart bypass operation. The 72-year-old will need three months off to recover from the op.

In a statement, it was reported the comedian said: "Sadly, I have been told very recently that I need a heart bypass operation. Whilst it's not desperate it is obviously something which I need to get done as soon as possible."

"All being well, the operation will take place in August and there will then follow a three-month recovery period after which I anticipate being able to return to work as normal. Unfortunately this effects a number of shows which unavoidably must be postponed until at least early spring next year."

"My sincere apologies to all the theatre-goers who have bought tickets to my shows but I know you will understand that my health comes before anything."

The Stand Up and Rock tour has seen all the dates from October onwards postponed.

Host of activities as 'play week' returns

CHILDREN can enjoy games, sports and craft activities this summer as a popular 'play week' returns.

Returning for a ninth year, the event organised by Dudley Council will begin on July 31 and run through to August 4. During the week there will be group games, sports, den building, crafts, assault courses, skittles, tug of war, sumo wrestling, glass painting and more.

Most of the activities are free. This year's events will be at Huntingtree Park, Halesowen on July 31, Silver Jubilee Park, Coseley on August 1, Mary Steven's Park, Stourbridge on August 2, Priory Park on August 3, The Dell Stadium and Fens Pool on August 4.

Activities take place daily from noon to 4pm. Children attending must be registered on arrival at the registration tent and must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

For more information visit sycamoreadventure.co.uk or call (01384) 813755.

Hopes for Cradley Heathens' new home are back on track

CRADLEY Heathens speedway club has had a major breakthrough in its 22-year search for a new home,

Plans are being submitted for a track in Oldbury.

The application is for a multi-purpose sporting venue, which would include a speedway track, at the Queens Field site on the Lion Farm Estate. It

has been handed to Sandwell Council by the club's supporters trust.

The Heathens are one of the biggest names in the sport but have been homeless since their famous Dudley Wood track was sold for housing in 1995. Their subsequent search for a new base has been fruitless with the club instead sharing tracks with various Midlands rivals.

After reforming in 2010, initially as

Dudley Heathens, the club has regularly-held talks with Dudley Council over a new home without success. Bosses have now opted for a site in Sandwell.

Club bosses congratulated the trust on submitting the application and urged all supporters to get behind the plans. The statement read: "We would urge all supporters of the club to fully embrace this scheme."

Chain Ale is special celebration brew

A BREWERY in Dudley has created a new ale to mark Black Country Day and it is on sale across the region.

Black Country Ales' 4.2 per cent strength Chain Ale, brewed at its Lower Gornal brewery at the Old Bull's Head, is now on sale at all of the Black Country Ales pubs across the region.

During the Black Country Festival, the BCA pubs, which include The Swan and The Whitley in Halesowen and The Cross Inn, Kinver, The Queen's Head in Wordsley and The Court House in Dudley, will also be offering a range of ales from other local breweries. These include AJ Ales, Walsall; Fixed Wheel, Blackheath; Green Duck, Stourbridge; and Holden's from Dudley.

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Woman stole £600k from own parents' firm

A WOMAN has been jailed for almost three years for stealing more than £600,000 from her family's engineering firm to help her husband start his own business.

Aimee Purchase, 36, was jailed for 32 months for defrauding Stourbridge-based MI Engineering Ltd, owned by her parents Ian and Yvonne Skidmore.

Shrewsbury Crown Court heard that Purchase, who had access to the funds at the family firm where she helped out, carried out the crime after being put under pressure by her husband Rikki Purchase to steal the money so that he could set up on his own.

Prosecuting barrister, Charles Hamer, said: "Aimee Purchase pleaded guilty on April 4, 2016 to committing fraud and the loss to the company totalling £667,175.71.

"The plea was under the Fraud Act but not all of it would have been related to her criminality. Her figure came down to about £570,000.

"Ultimately Rikki Purchase pleaded guilty and the total cash converted by him was £191,620.98."

Blame

Mr Hamer said the couple, from Much Wenlock, near Bridgnorth, were arrested in July 2015 when the offences came to light.

He told the court that Rikki Purchase initially gave a not guilty plea to the offence and the case was listed for trial. He then changed his plea which resulted to the pair, of Hunters Gate, being sentenced together in relation to the case.

Aimee Purchase admitted fraud and Rikki Purchase admitted the conversion of criminal property which he



Aimee Purchase - stole £600k from a firm owned by her parents

knew was the proceeds of criminal conduct between March 2013 and August 2014.

Judge Jim Tindal said he had received a letter from Mrs Skidmore who believed her daughter had been put up to the crime.

He said: "It is perfectly obvious to me that Aimee Purchase used her position to siphon the funds under the influence or pressure from her husband. "She was the only one who had access to the money."

Sentencing Rikki Purchase, 37, to two years jail, suspended for two years, Judge Tindal told him: "You



Rikki Purchase - two year sentence suspended for two years

take a significant amount of responsibility for what happened and you have pleaded guilty to quite a different offence than your wife."

"The main reason I'm suspending the sentence is due to the welfare of the children.

"You must also carry out 250 hours of unpaid work in the community and attend rehabilitation 15 activity days with probation."

He added that Aimee Purchase must serve up to 16 months of the term before being released on curfew.

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

Students have given healthy breakfast trial top marks

A SCHOOL raised more than £1,400 for a former student from Kingswinford who suffered a life-changing brain haemorrhage at the age of 16.

Wolverhampton Girls' High School raised the cash at a non-uniform day in aid of Elle-Mae Davidson, who is now aged 21.

Elle-Mae was a straight A student who had her sights set on a place at a top university when she suffered the haemorrhage in January 2013 and has left her severely brain damaged.

Money raised will go toward brain stem cell treatment.

A non-uniform day usually raises about £800. But after Elle-Mae's sister sent a video for teachers to show to their forms about Elle-Mae, students donated even more than hoped for.

Backing for new homes

A BID to build three homes behind a pub in Kingswinford has been backed by planners and was due to be decided this week.

The homes would be built on a parking area at the back of the Mount Pleasant Inn on Cot Lane, Kingswinford.

The proposals have been recommended for approval by Dudley Council planning officers and a decision was due this week.

STUDENTS at The Kingswinford School and Windsor High School and Sixth Form have been waking up to the benefits of a healthy breakfast.

The schools have teamed-up with the Co-op in a bid to fuel improved exam results.

Despite evidence to suggest that a healthy breakfast can boost focus, energy and concentration, the schools – both part of the Windsor Academy Trust – estimate that as many as two-thirds of its exam students either skip the first meal of the day or fail to hydrate properly.

Students have now given 'top marks' to the trial which has seen the Co-op serve-up more than 6,000 breakfasts to the Year 11 students during the GCSE exam period. The menus included items such as bananas, breakfast bars, cereal, products from its healthy snacking range and bottled mineral water.

Research carried out by the school shows 92 per cent of students feel water and breakfast products helped them to focus and calm nerves, while 86 per cent also claim it assists with thinking more clearly about their responses to exam questions.

Headteacher of Wind-

By Heather Large

sor High School and Sixth Form, Stephen Lanckham, said: "Every school wants the very best for their students and this support has been greatly appreciated by all students."

Bronwyn Hedley, head-teacher at The Kingswinford School, added: "It can be an extremely stressful time for the GCSE students in Year 11 and this venture supports them so well. They have really enjoyed the benefits."

Guy Wimbush, regional manager for the Co-op, said: "We are keen to support the schools' work which not only raises awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing but also has the potential to help the students to be at their best when sitting their exams."



Kingswinford student Emily Cooksey, second from right, with the award winners

Emily has designs on success

A STUDENT from the University of Wolverhampton is designing awards for a ceremony.

Emily Cooksey, 20, from Kingswinford, created bespoke illustrations for each of the winners at the Institute of Directors West Midlands Awards.

Emily, who is studying for an illustration degree at the Wolverhampton School of Art, designed each award based around the achievements and successes of the winners' business.

She said: "I was asked by my tutors to design each of the awards. Even though it was my first commission, I found it an interesting and stimulating challenge. I wanted to encompass all of the attributes each winner had shown and personalise the designs with a balance between their company and personal interests."

Share plan at former care home

A CARE home which closed following severe criticism from the health regulator could be turned into shared accommodation.

The Red House in Kingswinford closed last year following a damning inspection report from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which stated people were being 'deprived of their liberty'.

An application has now been lodged by M&L Homes to turn the building into a house of multiple occupancy, with room for 12 people.

The care home had been running for more than 30 years before being rated 'inadequate' by the CQC.

Relatives of some residents leapt to the defence of the staff following the criticism by the watchdog.

Hickory's is set to reopen

A POPULAR restaurant that burned down last year is set to reopen next week.

Hickory's Smokehouse at Wall Heath will open its doors at 11am on Wednesday.

Rebuilding on the Kidderminster Road restaurant began earlier this year after a fridge electrical fault last August sent the building up in smoke.

Hickory's is part of a small chain of restaurants.



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Stuart Wilde as Romeo and Aruhan Galieva as Juliet in Watermill Theatre's production

Vibrant youthful take on greatest romantic tragedy

Romeo + Juliet, Wolverhampton Grand HOPEFULLY youngsters, and some not-so-young audience members, will have new enthusiasm for William Shakespeare after The Watermill Theatre's vibrant and energetic production of *Romeo and Juliet*, re-titled *Romeo + Juliet*.

Using pop music, sung and played on stage by this talented troupe of actors, the Bard was given a 21st century makeover in a production full of youthful enthusiasm. That was quite fitting too, considering that according to the play Juliet was barely aged 14 at the time Romeo ruined her parents' marriage plans for her.

These young actors, several of them fresh from drama school, invested the story of the star-crossed lovers with vitality and plenty of teen attitude, at an evening performance plus a matinee aimed at students.

Stuart Wilde was charismatic as the tousle-haired leather jacket-clad Romeo. In the balcony scene, his Juliet's 'light through

REVIEWS

By Leon Burakowski

yonder window breaks' as she lit up a joint. They had met at Capulet's night club.

Aruhan Galieva was more than a match for Romeo as a guitar-strumming, passionate and petulant Juliet. Lauryn Redding's no-nonsense Northern nurse was a treat.

The production did owe something to Baz Luhrmann's 1996 movie version and the fight scenes were a bit hokey. Sometimes the music drowned out a line of dialogue or the words were too gabbled.

However, this is nit-picking. Director Paul Hart's production obviously loves Shakespeare and wants to communicate that to audiences. It did a good job.

Watermill also presented *Twelfth Night* during their visit. I hope they come back next year.

Who's a Faker in this mod world?

The Small Fakers, Who's Who Robin 2, Bilston

IT was a double bill made in Mod heaven, with the country's top tributes to the Small Faces and The Who joining forces at the leading Black Country R&B venue.

The Small Fakers kicked off in top gear with Whatcha Gonna Do About It and Sha La La La Lee, and kept up the momentum in an hour-long set finishing with a packet of three corks, Tin Soldier, Lazy Sunday and Afterglow.

Led by splendid front-man Matt Bond, who looks, sounds and moves like the late Steve Marriott, the Fakers were at their best on the sweaty, bluesy extended version of You Need Loving, though the audience also loved the Cockney capers of Itchycoo Park and Rene (The Docker's Delight).

Tommy

Who's Who have a bigger canon of songs to call upon, from the 60s, 70s and 80s, and a Roger Daltrey style bawler in Wayne Garamoni.

I Can See For Miles, The Seeker and the Tommy medley were impressive, as was the difficult to pull off Who Are You. But the emphasis on the 70s material made things less Mod and more prog rock.

If it were a contest, I reckon the Small Fakers won this Mod heavyweight clash on points.

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Saying farewell to one of their fallen comrades during a Boer War funeral service



A group of soldiers pose for the camera in the early 1900s



Bodies strewn across a battlefield during the Boer War

Revealed: Images of one man's Boer War

THEY are haunting images of the Boer War, all found in a fascinating time capsule put together by a former serviceman from the West Midlands.

The pictures, which have never been seen by the public before and include photographs of bodies on the battlefield, were discovered in a time capsule created by Robert Oliver.

They also show the funeral of a British serviceman together with the aftermath of the destruction caused by battle.

Mr Oliver fought in the conflict, which started in 1899 and ended in 1902, and was awarded the Queen's medal for South Africa after fighting in Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal and South Africa in 1901 and 1902.

After leaving the army he moved to Staffordshire, where he joined the county's police force.

His capsule of memorabilia, which

MEMORY LANE

Report by Jack Avery

was discovered in a house in Derby, also includes medals, hats and gloves will now be sold by auctioneer Charles Hanson

Mr Oliver's collection forms part of a Militaria sale, which will be held on July 25 and could fetch up to £1,000.

Mr Hanson said: "The collection is quite remarkable since it contains two pairs of original kid gloves, spurs, an ammunition bandolier, caps and hats, Queens and Kings South African medals.

"It also contains a glazed portrait of Robert Oliver, a photo album of unpublished personal photos of the war, a powder flask, cap badges, an original South African feathered headdress, a cartridge belt and other items.

"It really is quite an archive. We know from the family that Robert Oliver was quite a rogue in his youth. At the age of 16, he ran away, ending up

on a ship to Canada where he found work as a lumberjack. He later joined Staffordshire Police and our client's memory of him was that he was funny but firm and strict. Later in life he became a landlord, owning the Devonshire pub in Hartington.

"The photographs, never seen publicly before, comprise amazing images of a war which took a horrific number of lives.

"They include pictures of a Boer War dog, an observation balloon at Ladysmith and General Buller. There are also images of Boers and their homes, together with graphic images recording the harsh reality, and true horror, of war – something the Victorian press did not portray at the time, as the British Empire was deemed undefeatable. Britain went into the Boer War over-confident and under-prepared. The Boers were well armed and these guerrilla fighters carried out surprise attacks on the British, as, without uniforms, they blended easily into the farmlands which also provided hiding places for supplies and horses."



A Boer War dog used as a mascot for the soldiers

An officer, with his uniform including baton and bullet belt

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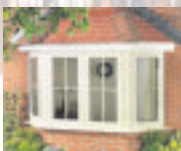
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20 More likely to die if admitted at weekends

Thursday, July 20, 2017

Dudley Chronicle

DEATH rates were higher for patients going to Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital at weekends last year.

Figures showed patients were more likely to die if they were admitted on Saturdays and Sundays rather than on weekdays during nine months of 2016.

Hospital bosses explained the findings were due to more 'acutely unwell' patients being admitted at weekends.

The hospital standardised mortality ratio (HSMR), which tracks death rates, gives a score of 100 for the NHS average. At Russells Hall it reached as high as 128.9 at weekends in September 2016, compared to a weekday score for the same month of 92.3. In July 2016 the weekend score was 125.8 against a weekday rate of 94.6.

There were only three months during the year when the weekend mortality score was lower.

Better

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall, said the HSMR 'did not reflect actual numbers of deaths' and was 'not designed or intended to identify this'.

She said: "The trust's HSMR is well within the expected range and our SHMI (summary hospital-level mortality indicator) is, in fact, better than average."

"We recognise that HSMR is well known nationally for appearing to show a difference between weekday and weekend admissions. There are a number of possible explanations for why this is the case, including the larger proportion of acutely unwell patients admitted at weekends, the methodology of how the data is calculated and the difference in provision of primary care services during the weekend."

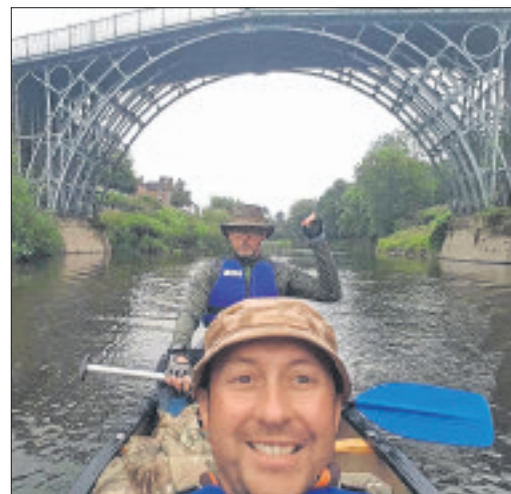
Water way to raise vital charity funds



Nick Wright and Jason Nicholls who walked the length of the River Severn



Kayaking back to the start of the challenge



The sight of iconic landmarks helped them on their way



The two, who hope to raise more than £500 for Meningitis Now

A BUSINESSMAN from Stourbridge and his friend have raised more than £5,000 by walking the length of the River Severn then kayaking back up it in memory of a baby who died from meningitis.

Fleur-Rose Allen, from Highley, near Bridgnorth, died in April last year after

By Jordan Reynolds

she was diagnosed with Streptococcal pneumonia septicaemia.

Her mother, Lizzie Allen, has held a number of fundraising events in memory of the 15-month-old.

A friend of the family, father-of-three Nick Wright and Jason Nicholls walked the length of

the River Severn – a total of 233 miles – and kayaked back up it to raise funds.

This latest fundraising effort has boosted the money raised to more than £20,000 for Meningitis Now.

Mr Wright, company director of Hartwright Commercial Stourbridge, said: "Our current Justgiving page balance sits at £5,300."

"It was tough to be honest, the walk took us five days of solid walking and the paddle back

took us three days which was 11 hours a day constant paddling covering over 40 miles a day.

"We had plenty of blisters and injuries along the way. The river in the upper reaches in Abermule, which is 12 miles outside Welshpool, was difficult as it was so low in areas that we had to physically carry the canoe and our back packs which were weighing 25kg each."

For more information, or to donate, visit justgiving.com/fundraising/Nick-Jason

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Winter ale fest' is at risk again

A MEETING was being held last night (Wednesday) to decide if a major real ales event in Dudley will go ahead this year.

No decision had yet been made on whether to stage the 2017 Dudley Winter Ales Fayre, organised by the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale.

It was holding a 'viability meeting' in the Park Inn, Woodsetton, to find out if enough people were willing to get involved in organising and running it.

The problem arose after several long-standing volunteers stepped down last year and the fayre was only saved after an 11th hour plea for help running the event.

Boss calls for 'common sense' over school holiday fines

LET'S be sensible over school holiday fines – that's the message of Dudley children's services boss as penalties are set to begin again.

Councillor Anne Millward said there should be a rethink on the policy of fining parents who take pupils out of school on holidays during term time. Councillor Millward, also a school governor, said there needed to be a 'sensible solution'.

Dudley Council will re-instate the fining system from the start of the next school year after it was halted following a high-profile legal challenge from a father on the Isle of Wight.

The authority said the move was 'overwhelmingly supported' by headteachers.

It means parents who take their children out of school during term time will be fined £60. If that is not paid within 21 days, it will rise to £120. But the move has proven unpopular with

many parents feeling it is unfair to be hit in the pocket for taking their child out of school, especially as holidays are more expensive outside term time.

Councillor Millward, cabinet member for children's services, said she sympathised with parents who only wanted to take their children out for a few days, and 'common sense should prevail'. She believes it should be for headteachers to decide each case on its merits.

Public urged to maintain graves

A CEMETERY has become a 'no-go' area for families because it is so overgrown.

Councillors have said the state of the graveyard at St Peter's Church in Upper Gornal is 'disrespectful', after receiving complaints from residents.

It comes as Dudley Council announced earlier this month that grass at 20 closed churchyards in the borough, many of which are home to military graves, will be cut just twice a year instead of seven times.

Council bosses have said the move is necessary to save around £15,000 a year, but families were welcome to look at set up their own maintenance groups.

Crews battle tyre blaze at yard



Firefighters tackle the blaze at Quarry Bank

Picture courtesy of @FireBrierley

PILES of tyres were destroyed during a blaze after a suspected arson attack at a Black Country yard.

The fire is believed to have been started deliberately, destroying around 100 tyres along Bobs Coppice Walk, Quarry Bank.

It saw two crews from Brierley Hill fire station attend and use hose reels to put out the flames.

Smoke could be seen billowing out from the site last Tuesday night (July 11).

Concerned

The fire service received dozens of calls from concerned members of the public about the fire.

A spokesman for West Midlands Fire Service said: "We received a 999 call from a member of the public alerting us to the fire along Bobs Coppice Walk, Quarry Bank.

"We sent two crews from Brierley Hill, comprising of one fire engine and one bridge response vehicle.

"A total of eight fire fighters attended the fire which involved approximately 100 fly-tipped vehicle tyres in an area of about five by 10 metres," the spokesman added.

"We used one hose reel and one main water jet to put out the fire along with drag rakes to turn over the tyres and check there were no hot spots.

"We believe the fire was started deliberately."

No one was hurt in the incident and the ambulance service were not called to attend.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call the police on 101.

Last direct flights to America pulled

UNITED Airlines is pulling out of Birmingham in a move that will sever the city's last direct air route to the USA.

United says the service between Birmingham and New York's Newark airport will be discontinued from October 5.

The airline has run the route for more than 20 years, carrying more than two million passengers, but is axing the route because of its 'poor financial performance'.

It is a major blow for Birmingham Airport and its growth plans, coming after rival US carrier American Airlines pulled its direct flights to New York JFK in January after operating it for just eight months in.

It means travellers from the West Midlands now face having to travel to Manchester or Heathrow for direct flights. Birmingham Airport said it was 'disappointed' at the decision. A spokesperson added: "We expect to be making an announcement shortly regarding another airline serving North America non-stop from Birmingham.

Choir needs new direction

A CHOIR is on the look out for a new music director.

Warley Male Choir, based at Warley Woods Methodist Church on Abbey Road in Birmingham, is hoping to appoint the new director to coach the choir to perform traditional and modern music.

The successful applicant would have experience in coaching and conducting choirs in concert performance. Contact secretary Brian Randle on 0121 422 5348, or brianrandle@blueyonder.co.uk

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Rocking down the years – Graham Gouldman, centre, performing with 10cc at the Robin 2



Soul legend Ben E King



Owner and founder Mike Hamblett inside the Robin 2 venue in Bilston



Female trio The Three Degrees were a big hit when they appeared on stage



Carol Decker of T'Pau



Home venue – Dave Hill, second left, with the current Slade line-up regular performers

Robin is still rockin' – 25 years on

IT all started as just a pipe dream in his parents' front room back in Quarry Bank

Now, a quarter of a century later Mike Hamblett's The Robin 2 is at the heart of the live music scene in the Black Country and celebrating its 25th anniversary year.

Since forming in 1992 the venue – originally called The Robin R'n'B Club in Quarry Bank before moving to Bilston and changing its name to The Robin 2 – has welcomed a huge array of stars. They have included the

late, great Ben E King, to Blues Brothers icon Steve Cropper, The Animals, Glenn Hughes, Billy Ocean, Peter Green and 10CC, to name but a few. At both of its grand openings The Robin has been officially opened by Slade's Noddy Holder. He was also joined by Roy Wood for the opening of the Robin 2 in 1998.

Not only has the club played host to top acts, but it has also paved the way for budding acts to get started. At the tender age of 13, Black Country blues sensation Joanne Shaw Taylor played her first-ever show at The Robin and has gone on to great things.

Mr Hamblett, who had formerly worked at GKN Sankey Vending in Bilston, said: "I was 37 years old when I opened The Robin R'n'B Club as I called it, at The Robin Hood Inn, in Pedmore Road, Quarry Bank, on April 9, 1992.

"I wanted to forge a business for myself in the music 'biz' – I figured there must be more to start than designing vending machines. I started the business from my mom and dad's front room in Victoria Road, Quarry Bank, just up the road from The Robin Hood, later to become my first venue.

"I started an independent record label by

and did PA hire for bands at night. The record label soon ate up all the money I had saved while at GKN, so it was off to the bank for a loan and, after a year or two, I managed to make a living – just."

In 1992, a school friend of Mike's took on the lease for The Robin Hood pub from former leaseholder Ray Hingley, who had made the venue famous after Chris Tarrant's OTT was filmed in the bar.

The venue had also become well-known locally for The Black Country Night Out at The Citizens Theatre, based at the back of the pub.

"Even though it was local I had never been in The Robin Hood, so I went down to see how John was doing," added Mike, now aged 63.

"He showed me around and took me into The Citizens Theatre which, by now, was hardly used and I said 'this would make a great venue'. I had a spare PA system available so, after much deliberation, I started bringing bands in to help John bring in some trade. And so, The Robin was born."

The second act to play were Soul Survivors, who returned as part of the anniversary celebrations.

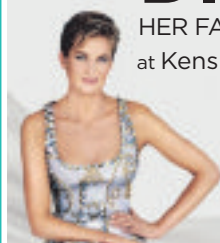
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MAGAZINE

Two awards add to college success story

DUDLEY College is celebrating adding even more awards to its prize cabinet having scooped two top accolades at this year's Education Awards.

At a glittering ceremony held at Edgbaston Stadium, principal Lowell Williams was named Educational Leader of the Year.

The college's Peter Jones Academy was recognised for continuing to grow the number of students engaged in successful enterprise activities by being crowned Entrepreneurial Education Establishment of the Year. The Education Awards is sponsored by Birmingham City University.

At the event, hosted by comedian Patrick Monahan, 16 awards were made to organisations from across the educational spectrum including schools, colleges and universities.

Mr Williams said: "It's been a fantastic week at the college for staff and students from our Peter Jones Enterprise Academy, as one of our students Jack Brooks was named National Entrepreneur of the Year by Peter Jones himself. To pick up the award for Entrepreneurial Education Establishment of the Year too, must mean we are doing something profoundly right. I'm personally delighted to be given an award which I'm accepting as recognition of the outstanding teaching and learning that Dudley College delivers."

Apprentice fair held at art and design centre

YOUNG people could have the chance to get on the path to work at an apprenticeship fair organised by Dudley South MP Mike Wood are being held at Stourbridge College's Art and Design Centre in Brierley Hill today (Thursday) from 2 to 5pm.

The fair will take place at the centre on Venture Way. For more information call (01384) 913123.

Family have questions over care after woman's suicide

007 auction has a licence to thrill



Just some of the James Bond movie memorabilia treasures which will be going to auction in Dudley

IT'S a collection made in 007 heaven as a huge collection of James Bond movie memorabilia stretching back over 50 years is set to go under the hammer in Dudley.

The huge private collection of film memorabilia has a bias towards James Bond films, as well as an extensive collection of 007 Collectable Toys.

Named the Yeovil Collection it features everything you need to be like James Bond including spy watches,

toy guns and fake passports – and is expected to fetch between £50,000 and £80,000.

Auctioneer Chris Aston says it has been a tough decision for the vendor to finally sell up after dedicating more than 30 years to amassing this treasure hoard.

They are working on cataloguing, photographing and valuing the thousands of items and they will be ready to go under the hammer in September.

Items up for grabs include a rare toy harpoon gun in original packaging. It is expected to fetch between £800 and £1,200. A Bond Scalextric set has an estimate of £1,000 to £1,500.

Mr Aston said: "It is such a large collection comprising of items worth anything from around £10 to into the thousands."

The film memorabilia will be sold at Aston's Auction House on September 19 and the toys on September 21.

A FAMILY has complained about the psychiatric treatment given to a woman who took her own life in Cradley Heath by setting herself on fire.

Sauqa Bi, aged 31, died on March 4 this year. At an inquest held at Jack Judge House, Oldbury, the court heard Miss Bi, who had a degree in economics and a masters, had left her employment as a marketing manager in late 2015.

Since then, she had undergone a series of mental health episodes and was in and out of Hallam Street Hospital, West Bromwich. She was diagnosed with adjustment disorder – a condition where a significant life event triggers anxiety and depression – in 2016.

A questionnaire filled out by a psychologist prior to her final discharge from hospital on January 4, 2017, suggested she may have had traits of borderline personality disorder along with traits of bipolar and schizotypal tendencies. She had previously overdosed on at least two occasions, had researched euthanasia on the internet and often talked about killing herself.

Brother Mohammed Usman said: "I don't understand why having that questionnaire completed to show she had all these traits that more was not done to investigate her condition."

Dr Syed Ahmed gave evidence at the inquest as the consultant who treated Miss Bi. He said: "From the multiple observations from myself, ward staff and nurses, Sauqa was bright and stable in hospital. From the presentations that myself and other ward staff observed, there was no evidence of mental illness."

Black Country coroner Zafar Siddique gave a conclusion of suicide.

Representatives of the Hospital Trust are now to meet with the family to discuss the 10-page complaint they submitted following Miss Bi's death.

Labour MP honours pay rise pledge

AN MP has donated £500 to a group which helps homeless young people. Dudley North MP Ian Austin handed the cheque to the YMCA Black Country Group.

He donated the cash from the good causes fund he set up with the 10 per cent pay rise handed to MPs in 2015.

The donation will support the YMCA's Open Doors Project which finds homes for homeless young people with local families.

The YMCA provides a range of youth and community services including accommodation, health advice, training and education for young people in the Black Country.

Mr Austin said: "I promised at the election that when times are tough for so many local families I would use the MPs' pay rise to help. The YMCA does brilliant work in Dudley and the wider Black Country."



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I'll sing for René with Power of Love

When Celine Dion takes to the stage at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena on Thursday – before returning to the venue on August 3 – she'll be watched over by the love of her life.

Celine's late husband, René Angélil, died last year. But he remains with her every minute of the day as she continues to grieve. The duo were inseparable and he remains permanently in her thoughts.

"I think I will probably grieve for the rest of my life.

"René has prepared me for all my life since I'm 12. I have never met another man in my life, never kissed another man in my life.

"I miss him a lot. I miss him a lot — for my partner, for the man I was embracing, kissing, making love with. My worries, my dreams . . ."

Celine says the couple made the best of their last weeks and months together. "No one chooses to be sick.

"Life imposes for you to be sick and you have the option to be strong or not be strong.

"But to be surrounded by the right people helps a lot because, if you know you will die, make the best of it.

"I proved to René that he was there for me and I'm going to be there for him — and I'm still there for him."

She still speaks to him and asks for advice. And, having sold 250 million records, she still hears his voice.

"He did suffer for three years. A lot.

"I took a year off and I said, 'My living well is to be with you, it's not my career. You are my career, you are my life'.

"That's what a wife does, that's what a mother does, that's what a performer does. I took care of him the best way I could.

PROUD

"We talked a lot and I took notes every day. I had my Post-its and my crayons and my book, and everything he wanted or questioned, or he thought of, I wrote it down.

"I reassured him it was going to be done his way — he chose the songs at his funeral, the way he wanted it, everything to a T. And I respected that.

"I'm extremely proud of my children. Proud of what my husband has prepared me for without knowing. Today I can tell you I am very strong. At one point I showed my children to stand up. Even though they don't have a Papa anymore, Mama is here. But Papa is in their heart."

Her husband's passing has had a profound effect on Celine. It has changed her outlook on life and given her a new appetite to live life fully — and to encourage her children to do likewise.

"It is something that I had no choice to take charge of, that I am proud of — to prepare my children [for] their dad's passing. And that was a lesson for me, that you never know when things like this strike and you need to take charge. It was a lesson for me, but they're doing great."

"It's best to never wait for tomorrow to do what can be done today."

She's a remarkable figure who has sold 250 million records — the second most successful female artist to Madonna.

At the age of 12, Celine recorded a demo tape of a song she had written with her mother. They sent the tape to the manager and producer René Angélil, who handled the career of popular French singer Ginette Reno. After hearing the tape and inviting Celine to perform for him in person, René signed her immediately under the

Because you loved me — Celine will sing for late hubbie, René



It's best to never wait for tomorrow to do what can be done today

condition that he would have complete control over her career. He mortgaged his own home to finance her debut album, La Voix du bon Dieu (The Voice of God).

By the age of 18, Celine had recorded nine French albums and won numerous Felix and Juno awards (the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy Award). In 1988, she won the Eurovision Song Contest representing Switzerland in Dublin, Ireland, and her performance was broadcast live in countries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Australia and Japan. After this taste of international acclaim, she began looking to the south, and American stardom.

Her real breakthrough into pop music stardom came in 1992, when she recorded the theme to Disney's hit animated feature Beauty and the Beast, a

duet with Peabo Bryson. The song,

Beauty and the Beast, made it to number nine on the Billboard Hot 100 and won both a Grammy and an Academy Award.

It was featured on her second English album,

Celine Dion, which became her first gold record in the United States and sold more than 12 million copies internationally.

The undeniable success of her self-titled effort, also including the hit If You Asked Me To, which made it to number four on the Billboard Hot 100 and number one on the adult contemporary chart, allowed Dion to launch her first headlining tour in the US.

In 1994, Dion happily merged her personal and professional life when she married René, who was 26 years her senior. René and his second wife had divorced in the 1980s, and, around that same time, he and Celine had begun a romantic relationship. Engaged in 1991, the couple tied the knot at Montreal's Notre Dame Basilica, in an elaborate ceremony that was celebrated throughout Canada.

She also scored a series of international number one hits, including The Power of Love, Think Twice, Because You Loved Me, It's All Coming Back to Me Now, and, of course, My Heart Will Go On, which featured on the soundtrack to one of the biggest grossing films of all time, Titanic, starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

*** For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**



Des O'Connor & Jimmy Tarbuck



Showbiz legends with a Grand night of anecdotes

Two showbiz veterans combine for a one-night only evening of star-studded anecdotes in Wolverhampton on Saturday.

Stars of TV and the Royal Variety Performances, Des O'Connor and Jimmy Tarbuck come together, accompanied by music and video to reminisce at the Grand Theatre.

O'Connor, now aged 85, has spent more than 60 years in the public eye. As well as hosting his own chat show and presenting game shows such as Take Your Pick, O'Connor has recorded 36 albums and has had four top-ten singles. He also became famous as the

source of gags by comedy double act Morecambe and Wise.

Liverpudlian comic Tarbuck, 77, was a regular host of Sunday Night At The London Palladium and Live From Her Majesty's and fronted several game shows including Winner Takes All.

"The show with Des is a lot of fun, I promise you. It's not like going to a show, it's like being allowed into a party," said Jimmy. "The reception all over the country, from the London Palladium to the regional theatres, has been incredible."

For further details visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429212.

Natasha steps up as Funny Girl star



Funny Girl brought global fame to Barbra Streisand 50 years ago, on Broadway, in the West End and then as a movie musical, and boasts such iconic songs as People and Don't Rain On My Parade.

It tells the story of Fanny Brice who went from burlesque to Broadway, becoming one of America's biggest stage and radio stars of the 1920s and 30s.

The latest revival has also confirmed Sheridan Smith as Britain's biggest current star of

musical theatre and she graced the stage at Birmingham Hippodrome earlier this year.

Now the show may be producing a third star with Natasha J Barnes stepping into the role at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday to Saturday. And she is no stranger to the role, having shared the limelight with Sheridan in the West End and on tour.

She will get steadfast support from a company that includes former Pop Idol finalist and now in-demand leading man Darius Campbell in the male lead role of Nick Arnstein. They are pictured together,

Other shows to look out for include Voice of the Heart, a tribute to the music of The Carpenters at the Grand tomorrow night (Friday).

A version of Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book combines street dance and circus skills at The Patrick Centre, within Birmingham Hippodrome, until Saturday.

The People's Orchestra present Superhero Symphonies, featuring music from the movies at the New Alexandra Theatre on Saturday.

The same venue hosts former X Factor winner Joe McElderry on July 27.

Miss Saigon is the summer blockbuster

Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed revival of Boubli and Schönberg's musical Miss Saigon lands at Birmingham Hippodrome for nine weeks from July 26. From the same pair who created Les Misérables, Miss Saigon is loosely based on Puccini's Madame Butterfly in its tragic romantic tale of a love affair between a Vietnamese bar girl and American GI during the last days of the Vietnam war.

Miss Saigon has become one of the most successful musicals in history, running for ten years in the West End and on Broadway. The show has been performed in 28 countries and in 15 different languages, and has won more than 40 awards. In Birmingham the central roles of Kim and Chris will be played Sooha Kim and Ashley Gilmour. For more details see www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Mental magic from trickster Derren

Illusionist Derren Brown will bring mind-bending magic and mental trickery to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Wednesday.

The 46-year-old star has baffled audiences in theatres and watching TV with his incredible feats, winning two Laurence Olivier Awards as well as a BAFTA.

His show Underground will feature some of his most famous illusions. It is not suitable for under 12s.

Visit www.atgtickets.com for further details.



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CHOICE



Mel Giedroyc

Pitch Battle (BBC1, 7.25pm)
The grand final of the singing contest arrives, as Mel Giedroyc assembles the six most successful entrants for their final performances. As ever, Gareth Malone and Kelis are tasked with assessing each group's skills, and for this last round, they are joined on the panel by Deke Sharon. The final begins with a musical mash-up, followed by a Showstopper round in which the ensembles collaborate with stars including Will Young, Chaka Khan, Bebe Rexha and Seal, among others. Three groups will be eliminated at this stage, leaving the other three to face off in an a capella contest, which will decide the two finalists. The ultimate winner will be named via public vote. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Athletics: Diamond League Monaco Highlights. **2.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Flog It! (R) **3.30** Film: Kung Fu Panda 2. (2011) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Jack Black. **4.50** Film: Shrek the Third. (2007) Animated sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. **6.15** BBC News. **6.25** Regional Programme. **6.35** Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present as famous faces take part in the general knowledge quiz in which they try to come up with the least likely correct answers to a series of questions posed to members of the public. (R) **7.25** Pitch Battle. The grand final of the singing contest arrives, as Gareth Malone, Kelis and Deke Sharon whittle the remaining six acts down to just two ahead of a public vote. Last in the series. **9.00** Casualty. Part two of two. Scott is admitted to the ED after taking a nasty fall during a fight with Mickey, and while Ethan is initially assigned to take care of him, the powers-that-be quickly realise this is a bad idea. Meanwhile, with both her sons in hospital, Elisson matriarch Denise turns up on the ward, and it is not long before she discovers the reason her boys were scrapping. Connie delights in bringing Grace into the department to show off her recovery, but when the youngster gets in the way of her mother's work, it becomes clear their relationship still isn't on an even keel. **9.50** BBC News: Weather.; National Lottery Update. **10.10** Would I Lie to You? Team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack are joined by Rhod Gilbert, Jamie Laing, Tracy-Ann Oberman and Claudia Winkleman, aiming to deceive their opponents with plausible lies. (R) **10.40** Film: Eagle Eye. (2008) Two strangers go on the run from the authorities after receiving phone calls warning their lives are in danger. Thriller, with Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monaghan. **12.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.35** BBC News.

BBC2

7.10 Film: Herbie Rides Again. (1974) **8.35** Film: Megamind. (2010) **10.00** Monty Halls' Great Irish Escape. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Nigel and Adam's Farm Kitchen. (R) **1.00** Film: Becoming Jane. (2006) Romantic period drama, starring Anne Hathaway and James McAvoy. **2.50** My Friend Jane. **3.20** Jane Austen: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.20** University Challenge. (R) **4.50** Gardeners' World. (R) **5.50** The Sweet Makers: A Tudor Treat. (R) **6.50** Proms Extra. New series. Katie Derham returns with the weekly magazine show, which offers a round-up of highlights from across the annual BBC Proms season. In this first edition, she reviews the opening week of Proms 2017, with help from a selection of guests. Among the performances appraised tonight are a rendition of Elgar's Second Symphony, conducted by Daniel Barenboim, and a selection of memorable music from the movies, courtesy of John Williams. **7.30** Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring's men acquire a boat, planning to use it for coastal patrols, but they get lost in fog and believe they have crossed the Channel when they finally reach dry land. (R) **8.00** Golf: The Open. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the third day of the prestigious event, which takes place at Royal Birkdale Golf Club in Southport. The players to have made the cut will have been attempting to move themselves into contention for the Claret Jug with a strong round today, as they aim to succeed 2016 champion Henrik Stenson. Commentary by Peter Allis and Andrew Cotter. **10.00** Performance Live: Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere. Kirsty Wark introduces a production of journalist Paul Mason's "popular protest" play, which tells the story of modern revolutions, broadcast live from the Young Vic. **11.00** QI XL. Panelists Sue Perkins, Romesh Ranganathan, Bill Bailey and Alan Davies compete, as Stephen Fry hosts an extended edition of the irreverent quiz show. **11.45** Film: Cosmopolis. (2012) David Cronenberg's drama, with Robert Pattinson and Juliette Binoche. **1.25** Film: Tim. (1979) **3.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.45** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Home Game. (R) **10.25** The Voice Kids Final. (R) **12.10** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** Live Pre-Season Football: Arsenal v Chelsea (Kick-off 12.40pm). **2.55** Tipping Point. (R) **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** Little Big Shots USA. **6.00** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.10** ITV News: Weather. **6.20** You've Been Framed! XXL. Harry Hill presents an extra-large edition of the show, revisiting some of the best mishaps, hijinks and side-splitting disasters captured on video by intrepid viewers. (R) **7.20** Catchphrase. The big-screen guessing game continues, as Stephen Mulhern invites three more contestants decipher the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues in an attempt to win £50,000. **8.00** Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. (2012) Unassuming hobbit Bilbo Baggins is pulled out of his comfortable life when Gandalf the wizard volunteers him for a dangerous quest. He joins a party of dwarves who are on a mission to reclaim their lost homeland, which has been taken over by a dragon. When the group journeys into the Misty Mountains, Bilbo becomes separated from the dwarves and falls into a cave, where he finds himself confronted by Gollum and forced to play a riddle game. It is set in Middle-earth 60 years before the events of The Lord of the Rings and is the first part of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, James Nesbitt, Ken Stott, Cate Blanchett, Ian Holm and Christopher Lee. **11.15** ITV News: Weather. **11.35** The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents. (R) **12.30** Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Cycling: Velothon Wales. **7.15** Motor Sport: British Rally Championship. **7.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.35** Frasier. (R) **9.05** Frasier. (R) **9.35** Frasier. (R) **10.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.30** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** World Para Athletics Championships London 2017. Sophie Morgan, Arthur Williams and Lee McKenzie present coverage of the evening session on day nine of the Championships, which takes place at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Another 18 gold medals are set to be decided on what is the penultimate day of the games, with events including the men's 143, 144 and 147 200m, and the women's T37 and T38 100m. With analysis from Danny Crates and David Weir. **10.00** Film: Fast & Furious 6. (2013) A gang of fugitives reunites to take down a criminal syndicate that is aided by a friend they thought was dead. Action thriller sequel, with Vin Diesel and Dwayne Johnson. **12.30** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Gordon Ramsay heads for West Babylon, New York, where he helps the owners of restaurant Classic American deal with their escalating debts and a lack of leadership in the kitchen. (R) **1.20** 60 Days in Jail. Another three new participants enter the programme. (R) **2.10** Hollyoaks: Omnibus. Armstrong convinces Cindy to do a talk about powerful women in Liverpool, while Scott goes searching for his brother. **4.15** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. New series. The host helps three homeowners struggling to sell their properties in Cardiff, giving them £1,000 to make improvements to impress buyers Beth and Harriet. Previously seen on More4. **5.10** Kirstie's Handmade Treasures. Kirstie Allsopp visits the Devon County Show. (R) **5.25** Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer help two couples house-hunting in north-west London, including a pair who have already looked at almost 100 properties during their search. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.55** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.15** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.10** 5 News Weekend. **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.10** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Brian O'Shaughnessy and Graham Aldred's first case sees them in a Brighton health spa as they search for assets to seize in pursuit of a £20,000 debt. (R) **7.00** Blind Date. The dating game show concludes, as Paul O'Grady sets out to help two more singletons find romance. This time, he lends his assistance to Sophie, a flight attendant who hopes to find a cheeky chap who can love her in spite of her goofy, childlike ways. Also seeking a spark of attraction is Ted, a business development manager who is looking for a kind-hearted girlfriend who is also independent and ambitious. Plus, Paul catches up with last week's couples to find out how whether their dates were a success. Last in the series. **8.00** Named and Shamed: Greatest Celebrity Scandals. A rundown of the most salacious celebrity scandals to shock the worlds of pop, film, television and sport, including Cheryl's infamous bust-up in a nightclub toilet. **9.00** Big Brother. Daily round-up of highlights, featuring more games, arguments, laughs, diary room visits and bedroom chit-chat, as well as reactions to the latest eviction. **10.00** 20 Moments That Shocked Comedy. Countdown of memorable comedy moments, including the launch of The Young Ones and Spitting Image, and the controversy surrounding Monty Python's Life of Brian. Last in the series. (R) **11.25** Funniest Fails, Fails & Flops. Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong, unwise acts and failed attempts of misplaced ambition. (R) **11.50** Access. **12.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Film: Under Ten Flags. (1960) **4.45** Access. (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Forest, Field & Sky: Art Out of Nature **8.00** The Last Seabird Summer? **9.00** I Know Who You Are **11.25** Top of the Pops: 1984 **12.35** How to Be a World Music Star: Buena Vista, Bhundu Boys and Beyond **2.05** A to Z of World Music **3.35** Close **ITV2**
11.50 Film: Hulk (2003) **12.50** FYI Daily **12.55** Film: Hulk (2003) **2.35** The Voice Kids Final **4.20** Film: Babe (1995) **5.20** FYI Daily **5.25** Film: Babe (1995) **6.15** Film: The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) **7.15** FYI Daily **7.20** Film: The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) **9.00** Love Island: The Weekly Hot List **10.05** Celebrity Juice **10.50** Family Guy **12.15** American Dad! **1.10** Film: Zack and Miri Make a Porno (2008) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15** Film: Zack and Miri Make a Porno (2008) **ITV3**
1.30 ITV Racing: Live from Newbury, Market Rasen & Newmarket. **4.00** Kate: The Making of a Modern Queen **5.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Film: Mamma Mia! (2008) **8.05** FYI Daily **8.10** Film: Mamma Mia! (2008) **9.10** Foyle's War **11.20** Law & Order: UK **2.15** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4**
11.00 Tour de France Highlights **11.55** La Course: Tour de France Live. **12.45** Tour de France Live. **5.00** Better Late Than Never **6.00** Monster Carp **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** Film: Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment (1985) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10** Film: Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment (1985) **9.55** Film: Passenger 57 (1992) **10.55** FYI Daily **11.00** Film: Passenger 57 (1992) **11.40** Film: Death Wish 3 (1985) **12.45** FYI Daily **12.50** Film: Death Wish 3 (1985) **1.35** Tour de France Highlights **2.25** The Car Chasers **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**
11.30 The Goldbergs **1.00** Film: Space Chimps 2: Zartog Strikes Back (2010) **2.40** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Speed (1994) **11.20** Gogglebox **1.30** Tattoo Fixers **2.35** Rude Tube **3.25** Gogglebox **4.15** How I Met Your Mother **5.00** Rude(ish) Tube **Film4**
11.00 Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009) **1.00** Grease (1978) **3.10** Carry On Cabby (1963) **4.55** Robots (2005) **6.40** Men in Black 3 (2012) **9.00** Darkman (1990) **10.50** The Counsellor (2013) **1.05** Sleepy Hollow (1999) **3.20** Close

The ticket

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CHOICE



Matt Baker

Wild Alaska Live (BBC1, 7pm)
New series. Liz Bonnin, Matt Baker and Steve Backshall present footage of animals gathering for the region's annual summer feast. The first programme focuses on salmon migrations, with underwater footage of the fish making their lengthy journey, as well as the bears that wait to feed on them. Plus, off the coast, walruses gather on a small island and scientists study the social groups of orcas.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** **Film:** Oz the Great and Powerful. (2013) Fantasy adventure, starring James Franco. **5.00** Lifetime. **5.10** Songs of Praise. **5.45** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **6.30** **BBC News.** **6.50** **Regional Programme.** **7.00** **Wild Alaska Live.** New series. Liz Bonnin, Matt Baker and Steve Backshall present footage of animals gathering for the region's summer feast, beginning with a look at bears and migrating salmon. **8.00** **Countryfile.** John Craven visits a conservation project for great bustards in Salisbury Plain, while Anita Rani meets contestants in the international young beekeepers' competition at Marlborough college and helps out with volunteers trying to stop one of England's most important chalk streams from drying up. Plus, artisanal flower growing in the Marlborough Downs and a farmer who keeps sheep for their milk. **9.00** **Poldark.** George plans to stand for parliament, but fails to make a good impression on a potential ally at Caroline's wedding reception and is forced to seek support elsewhere. Agatha prepares to celebrate her 100th birthday, and Hugh becomes infatuated with Demelza, although Ross dismisses the possibility. Morwenna's sister turns up at the Whitworth vicarage, and Sir Francis Bassett plans to challenge Falmouth's political monopoly in Truro, and invites Ross and Demelza to Tehidy so he can make a proposal. **10.00** **BBC News.** **10.20** **Regional Programme.** **10.30** **Miranda Hart – My What I Call Live Show.** A filmed performance of stand-up comedy. (R) **11.30** **Film: Gambit.** (2012) A put-upon art expert plans revenge on a millionaire by tricking him into buying a fake Monet painting. Comedy remake, starring Colin Firth, Cameron Diaz and Alan Rickman. **12.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The Beachgrove Garden. (R) **9.15** Countryfile. (R) **10.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.45** Nigel Slater: Eating Together. (R) **12.15** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **1.00** Diving: World Championships. **2.30** Wanted Down Under. (R) **3.15** Natural World: Living with Baboons. (R) **4.15** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Live Swimming: World Championships. Helen Skelton presents coverage of day one from Danube Arena in Budapest, Hungary, which will include the finals of the women's and men's 400m freestyle disciplines. **7.00** **Inside the Factory.** Gregg Wallace and Cherry Healey visit factories to find out how household staples are made, while Ruth Goodman steps back in time to examine their history. (R) **8.00** **Golf: The Open.** Eilidh Barbour present highlights of the final day of the prestigious event, which took place at Royal Birkdale Golf Club in Southport. The winner of this year's tournament would not only get to lift the famous Claret Jug, but add their name to an illustrious list of champions that includes the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Tiger Woods and Seve Ballesteros, and should a British player emerge victorious they will have been the first to do so since Paul Lawrie in 1999. Commentary by Peter Allis, Ken Brown and Andrew Cotter. **10.00** **Film: Maps to the Stars.** (2014) Premiere. A disfigured woman is hired as an assistant to a fading Hollywood star obsessed with her dead mother. David Cronenberg's drama, starring Julianne Moore and Mia Wasikowska. **11.45** **Film: The Skin I Live In.** (2011) A plastic surgeon keeps a woman prisoner in his home, and uses her in experiments to create synthetic skin. Pedro Almodovar's thriller, starring Antonio Banderas. **1.35** Sign Zone: Countryfile. Ellie Harrison visits a Scottish island that is home to the largest puffin colony on Britain's east coast, and Sean Fletcher investigates the history of fruit growing in Fife. (R) **2.35** Holby City. Essie worries that she is not being a good foster parent to Parker, and a tricky patient diagnosis throws Morven straight in at the deep end on her first day back. (R) **3.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjago: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Wild Animal Reunions. (R) **10.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.20** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **12.50** ITV News: Weather. **12.55** Rebound. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **2.55** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **3.25** **Film:** Octopussy. (1983) James Bond spy adventure, starring Roger Moore. **6.00** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.10** **ITV News;** Weather. **6.30** **The Chase Celebrity Special.** Paul Young, Jade Jones, Aljaz Skorjanec and Arthur Smith answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh. **7.30** **Film: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.** (2005) Adolescent wizard Harry is unexpectedly chosen to represent Hogwarts School in a prestigious magical tournament, despite being legally too young to enter. Along with charming sixth-year student Cedric Diggory, Harry takes on the champions of two other magical academies visiting the school facing deadly monsters in a series of death-defying challenges. Meanwhile, the followers of the dreaded Lord Voldemort plot to restore their master to the land of the living. Fourth instalment of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Robbie Coltrane, Ralph Fiennes, Michael Gambon, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, Brendan Gleeson and Robert Pattinson. **10.20** **ITV News;** Weather. **10.40** **Judge Rinder's Crime Stories.** The 2011 case of the murder of Sian O'Callaghan, who was killed by a taxi driver. Upon his arrest, the murderer offered to show police where a second body could be found. (R) **11.40** **Take Me Out.** A firefighter, a barber, a test driver and a gym instructor try to impress 30 single women and win a date. (R) **12.45** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Last Man Standing. **6.45** Last Man Standing. **7.10** Last Man Standing. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Eat the Week. **1.30** **Film:** Eragon. (2006) Fantasy adventure, starring Ed Speleers. **3.35** The Restoration Man. (R) **4.35** Homes by the Sea. **5.35** Channel 4 News. **6.00** **World Para Athletics Championships London 2017.** Lee McKenzie, Ade Adepitan and Sophie Morgan present coverage of the evening session on the final day of the Championships, which takes place at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Despite being the last day of competition there are still 13 gold medals to be decided tonight, including the men's T54 5,000m, and the women's T44 200m and T53 800m. With analysis from Jonnie Peacock, Liam Malone, Danny Crates, Stef Reid and Millie Knight, and commentary by John Rawling, Rob Walker and Katharine Merry. **7.30** **UEFA Women's Euro 2017.** England v Spain (Kick-off 7.45pm). Coverage of the second match in Group D for both sides, which takes place at Rat Verlegh Stadion in Breda, Netherlands. These nations were also drawn in the same group as each other at the 2013 staging of the tournament, and on that occasion it was Spain who emerged triumphant, with the 3-2 victory helping them to qualify for the knockout stage, while England crashed out at the first hurdle. Presented by Clare Balding, with expert analysis from Ian Wright, Eniola Aluko and Kim Little, and commentary by Steve Bower and Lucy Ward. **10.00** **The Handmaid's Tale.** Offred is given a mission by the May Day rebels, to return to Jezebel's and collect something they need. Janine takes drastic action after being forced to give up her baby. **11.05** **Film: Kingdom of Heaven.** (2005) A French blacksmith becomes a knight and swears to protect Jerusalem during the Crusades. Ridley Scott's historical epic, starring Orlando Bloom. **1.40** Undercover Boss USA. (R) **2.30** The Last Leg. (R) **3.25** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **3.55** Gillette World Sport.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Pip Ahoi! **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.20** Mr Men. **6.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.40** Wissper. (R) **6.50** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.00** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.10** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.25** Wissper. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Little Princess. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.50** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.10** **Film:** Little Nicky. (2000) Comedy fantasy, starring Adam Sandler. **3.45** **Film:** Legally Blonde. (2001) **4.50** 5 News Update. **4.55** **Film:** Legally Blonde. (2001) **5.35** **Film:** Ace Ventura: Pet Detective. (1994) Comedy, starring Jim Carrey. **7.10** **Funniest Cutest Kittens Ever.** Iain Lee narrates a compilation of comical clips involving cats getting up to no good. **8.00** **Big Brother.** Daily round-up of highlights, featuring the latest tasks, games, arguments, laughs, diary room visits and bedroom chit-chat. Narrated by Marcus Bentley. **8.55** **5 News Weekend.** **9.00** **Whitney and Bobby: Added to Love.** Documentary drama exploring the story of Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown's relationship from 1990 through to her death in 2012. (R) **10.50** **Whitney Houston: Her Greatest Hits.** A celebration of the performer's most popular songs and music videos, from her first number one, 1985's Saving All My Love for You, to her 1992 version of I Will Always Love You. (R) **11.50** **OMG! My Midlife Plastic Crisis.** People using surgery to recapture their lost youth, including a man who feels his suits do not look right any more and a woman who wants to have Britain's largest fake breasts. **12.50** Access. (R) **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** The Kidnapping of Shergar. (R) **4.00** The Railways That Built Britain with Chris Tarrant. (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four **7.00** BBC Proms 2017 **8.50** Operation Crossbow **9.50** Storyville: Accidental Anarchist: Life without Government **10.50** After Life: The Strange Science of Decay **12.20** Dissected: The Incredible Human Foot **1.20** Britain's Whale Hunters: The Untold Story **2.20** Neil Diamond: Electric Prom **3.25** Close **ITV2** **11.15** Ninja Warrior UK **12.15** You've Been Framed! Gold Top 100 Sport Stars **1.20** **Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **2.20** FYI Daily **2.25** **Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **3.15** **Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.15** FYI Daily **4.20** **Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.55** **Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** **Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **7.00** **Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **8.05** FYI Daily **8.10** **Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **9.00** Love Island **10.00** Love Island: Afternoon **11.20** Family Guy **12.40** American Dad! **1.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.05** The Vamps: The Hot Desk **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **11.30** The Darling Buds of May **12.40** **Film:** Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1990) **2.45** Wycliffe **3.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.55** Foyle's War **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.00** Wire in the Blood **1.55** Lewis **3.35** May the Best House Win **5.15** On the Buses **ITV4** **11.40** Monster Carp **12.45** **Film:** Police Academy 3: Back in Training (1986) **1.45** FYI Daily **1.50** **Film:** Police Academy 3: Back in Training (1986) **2.30** Tour de France Highlights **3.30** Tour de France Live. **7.00** Fierce **8.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special **9.00** Tour de France Highlights **10.00** An Audience with Billy Connolly **11.10** **Film:** Crank: High Voltage (2009) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15** **Film:** Crank: High Voltage (2009) **E4** **11.00** **Film:** Astro Boy (2009) **12.45** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **1.00** New Girl **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** **Film:** Fantastic Four (2005) **10.00** **Film:** Sinister (2012) **12.15** Rude Tube **1.20** 8 Out of 10 Cats **2.10** Gogglebox **3.10** Rude Tube **3.35** Hollyoaks **Film4** **11.00** Earth vs the Flying Saucers (1956) **1.00** Cutthroat Island (1995) **3.20** Johnny English (2003) **5.15** Titanic (1997) **9.00** The Ladykillers (2004) **11.05** Snake Eyes (1998) **1.10** Conspirators of Pleasure (1996) **3.00** Close



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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Killing Game, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A forensic sculptor whose daughter disappeared years previously receives a series of menacing phone calls from a man claiming to have killed her and announces his intention to strike again. She sets out to expose his identity before another girl dies, and maybe find out where her child is buried. Mystery based on Iris Johansen's novel, starring Laura Prepon and Ty Olsson. (2011)

TUESDAY

A Daughter's Nightmare, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A grieving widow finds a shoulder to cry on in the form of a charming male nurse, but when her health suddenly begins to fail, her daughter embarks on a dangerous search for the truth about her illness. Drama, starring Emily Osment, Paul Johansson and Victoria Pratt. (2013)



The Sentinel, Friday, BBC1, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY

Who Killed My Husband?, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A widowed police officer embarks on a dangerous mission to generate enough income to pay for her daughter's hospital bills, causing her to question how far she is willing to go to save her child. Thriller, starring Andrea Bowen, Yasmeene Ball and Jim Thorburn. (2016)

THURSDAY

A Woman Deceived, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A wealthy young widow marries the man who organised the event at which her husband was killed, and for a while her life seems perfect - until financial concerns begin to create tension. Thriller, starring Ashley Scott, Jay Pickett and Brian Krause. (2017)

FRIDAY

The Sentinel, BBC1, 11.05pm

A secret service agent is convinced a member of a neo-Nazi militant group has infiltrated the White House. But his attempt to investigate comes to a halt when he is framed for murder and blackmailed over his affair with the president's wife. As he battles to clear his name, his former protege is given the task of bringing him to justice. Spy thriller, starring Michael Douglas and Kiefer Sutherland. (2006)

Duo are taking an emotional trip down memory lane

What are your memories of Diana, Princess of Wales?

Many people will always remember her as the fairytale royal bride arriving at St Paul's Cathedral for her marriage to Prince Charles; or the fun-loving princess dancing the night away with John Travolta at the White House.

Unfortunately, there were also sadder times, as she revealed in a TV interview that she had suffered depression, eating disorders and that "there were three of us in this marriage".

But for her two sons, HRH The Duke of Cambridge and HRH Prince Harry, the world's most photographed woman will always simply be their mischievous mother, whose love of life was infectious - perhaps best shown on their famous family outing to Thorpe Park.

"She was one of the naughtiest parents," Harry admits.

This intimate documentary made by the producers behind ITV's Our Queen at 90 is being shown to

commemorate the 20th year since Diana's tragic death.

It is built around contributions from William and Harry, both of whom talk openly about their mother and pay tribute to the many ways she has influenced their lives.

Back in April, the princes admitted that they failed to talk to each other enough about the death of their mother and that not doing so only made matters worse.

Speaking about the trauma they endured as children when Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris in 1997, the princes urged people to be more open with their emotions.

They acknowledged in a video with the Duchess of Cambridge, released as part of their campaign to tackle mental health in Britain, that they had bottled up their feelings about her death rather than sharing them.

However, judging by this documentary, the two princes are starting to become more comfortable talking about their mother.

Prince Harry says: "This is the first time that the two of us have ever spoken about her as a mother."

In one particularly poignant scene, they are shown leafing through a treasured photograph album put together by Diana and recall some of the most joyful and touching moments from their childhood.

Studying a photo of his mother holding him while pregnant with Harry, William says: "Believe it or not, you and I are both in this photograph, you're in the tummy!"

"She was very informal and really enjoyed the laughter and the fun. But she understood that there was a real life outside of the palace walls."

As well as William and Harry, there are interviews with other key figures in Diana's life, including close friends and family.

The programme also focuses on the princess's contributions to public life, and her extensive charity and humanitarian work in areas including landmines, child bereavement and homelessness.



Diana, Our Mother: Her Life and Legacy, Monday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

knowhow or patience to take on a big project. In the first episode, the trio revive an unloved dining room using a Cuban theme, as Ant tries his hand at painting tiles, Robin makes a beaded chandelier and Clem learns how to craft her own knife.

WEDNESDAY

The Sweet Makers: A Georgian Treat BBC2, 8pm

Four modern confectioners use original recipes, equipment and ingredients to recreate the extravagant displays of a Georgian confectionery shop. Guided by food historian Dr Annie Gray and social historian Emma Dabiri, the foursome travel to Bath to experience first-hand the life of confectioners in late 18th and early 19th-century England. The sweet-makers craft everything from towering jellies made from boiled calves feet, glasses of Parmesan ice cream, and a final course featuring an edible landscape.

The Windsors

Channel 4, 10pm

Kate and Wills visit Charles's traditionalist new town, Poundbury in Dorset, where

Charles is unveiling another statue of himself. Pippa ponders whether she should leave her fiancé Johnny, after she learns that he has lost his fortune and has become a pizza delivery man. Meanwhile, Kate runs into old flame Gypsy Ricky, who reminds her they are still married following a traditional gypsy ritual. Will Camilla use this to destroy Kate in her latest plan to grab power?

Starring Harry Enfield, Louise Ford and Hugh Skinner.

THURSDAY

Top of the Lake: China Girl BBC2, 9pm

Director Jane Campion's detective drama returns for a second series - and not only is The Handmaid's Tale star Elisabeth Moss reprising her role as Detective Robin Griffin, she's joined by Nicole Kidman and Gwendoline Christie of Game of Thrones' fame. The series sees Robin return to Sydney after four years in New Zealand, ready to throw herself

into her work, but when a suitcase containing the body of a young woman washes up on Bondi Beach, the cop is faced with an investigation that will lead closer to home than she could have imagined. That's because Robin is also privately searching for the daughter she gave up for adoption, the now 17-year-old Mary (Alice Englert), who is as odds with adoptive mum Julia (Kidman) - and in thrall to an older boyfriend with links to a brothel where a sex worker has gone missing.

FRIDAY

Big Brother: Live Final Channel 5, 9pm

The 18th series of the reality TV favourite (although there are new pretenders to the throne - Love Island, we're looking at you) reaches its climax tonight as the remaining few housemates deemed most popular with voting viewers over the past eight weeks find out who among them will emerge the victor. Emma Willis is, of course, on hand to reveal the result, evicting the finalists one by one (and viewing their best bits), before finally chatting to the winner about their experience in the house. Then it's over to Rylan for a further set of interviews in Bit on the Side. And if you're wondering what to do with your evening's now it's all over, worry not - the Celeb version will be back in a week.



Top of the Lake: China Girl, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

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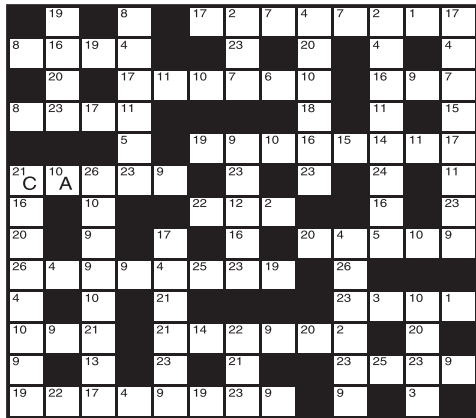
Contact Tracey Thompson
on 01902 319645 or email
tracey.thompson@expressandstar.co.uk

BRAIN GYM

No.439

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
H	S	Y	A	B	D	T	U	G	X	K	M	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	O	P	L	C	R	E	J	I	F	W	V	N

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

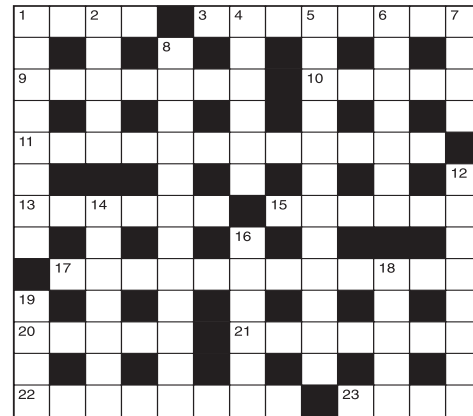
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. See 23 Across
3. Capt Dale could be appeased (8)
9. Small spot allowed to fall first (7)
10. Drop down (5)
11. Spiteful observations about a household pet? (5,7)
13. The end of the calibration should be zero (6)
15. Stick in this position after short notice (6)
17. One who helps you to fill up the form (12)
20. Giving the confection a frosty look! (5)
21. Medical case willing to be tolerant (7)
22. Bestow ecclesiastical honour on, in case there's a Reformation! (8)
- 23 & 1Ac. Bring up the majority right at the back (8)

Down

1. It's handled by an expert in physics (8)
2. Strong porter showing dauntlessness (5)
4. Badly rattle the one mentioned second (6)
5. Instructions written on the tablets! (12)
6. Freight vehicle with the French bed (7)
7. An obligation for tax (4)
8. Be instrumental in using the manual (4,3,5)
12. Saw a tree destroyed by the briny (3,5)
14. Endlessly continue strange sanctifying grace (7)
16. Bolts together (6)
18. Lord or vassal for example discovered in falsehood (5)
19. The last character incorporated a non-corrosive element (4)



Quick Clues:

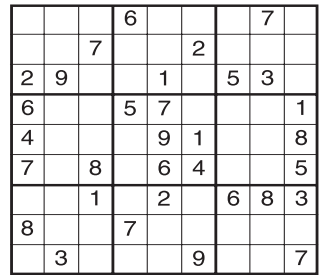
Across

1. Fury (4)
3. Composition (8)
9. Frugal (7)
10. Ensnare (5)
11. Telling wrongly (12)
13. Inform (6)
15. Assert (6)
17. Accompaniment (12)
20. Start (5)
21. Monkshood (7)
22. Tied up (8)
23. Warmth (4)

Down

1. Renewing (8)
2. Tumbler (5)
4. Area (6)
5. Mass (12)
6. Concentrated (7)
7. Reverberate (4)
8. Import (12)
12. Passionate (8)
14. Cogitation (7)
16. Transfix (6)
18. Ingenious (5)
19. Aid (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	4	3	5	2	8	1	9	7
9	7	1	6	3	4	2	5	8
5	2	8	9	7	1	4	6	3
3	1	9	2	5	6	8	7	4
4	8	5	7	1	3	6	2	9
7	6	2	4	8	9	3	1	5
2	3	4	1	9	5	7	8	6
8	5	7	3	6	2	9	4	1
1	9	6	8	4	7	5	3	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Prophet; 7 Strut; 9 Avoid; 10 Love-all; 12 Under orders; 14 Very well off; 18 Palaver; 19 Drill; 21 Stole; 22 Reserve. Down: 1 Grave; 2 Option; 3 Let; 4 Attend; 5 Cutlery; 8 Monocle; 11 Deleted; 13 Penalty; 15 Yearly; 16 Forger; 17 Glove; 20 Beg.
 QUICK - Across: 6 Excerpt; 7 Vixen; 9 Total; 10 Congeal; 12 Indifferent; 14 Fundamental; 18 Ecstasy; 19 Scare; 21 Cease; 22 Prosper. Down: 1 Extol; 2 Retain; 3 Ape; 4 Finger; 5 Remains; 8 Confine; 11 Dismiss; 13 Quicken; 15 Detest; 16 Accost; 17 Greed; 20 Dry.

Quiz

1. Of whom was the Colossus of Rhodes a statue?
2. Which sport's two forms are the snatch and the clean and jerk?
3. Which element accounts for 70 per cent of the sun?
4. By what familiar name is Alexandra Legge-Bourke known?
5. What is the capital of North Korea?
6. What do the letters VHF stand for?
7. In which age was the Minoan civilization?
8. Who wrote several novels featuring the poet Enderby?
9. As governor of which prison was John Marriott sacked in January 1995?
10. What name did Portuguese dancer Maria do Carmo Miranda da Cunha assume?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 A rodent; 2 Owls; 3 Edward Heath; 4 Mississippi; 5 Asunción; 6 Impeachment; 7 William Burroughs; 8 Spain and Portugal; 9 Cod; 10 Daedalus.
 Niner: PERVADING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

9186438
 915354
 1278

gives a ghost,
 gives a second ghost,
 gives ghostly.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Green for go at Second City cafe

It can often be a real struggle to find a place to unwind and relax when out and about in a busy city centre on a Saturday afternoon. Birmingham always has plenty going with its abundance of shops, restaurants and bars.

So when you stumble across a lovely little venue that helps to remove all the stresses and strains of city life, it's worth pointing out.

The Green Room café is the closest bar and restaurant to the Birmingham Hippodrome. Sitting practically on the doorstep of the second city's top theatre, in The Arcadian, it prides itself on being the perfect place to grab a pre-theatre meal, relax with some interval or post-theatre drinks – or, for people like us, it caters for those who simply fancy a break and something nice to eat.

It was my brother Tom's pre-birthday treat so along with his fiancée, Claire, and my two-year-old daughter, Annabelle, we decided to try somewhere that looked welcoming and not overly fancy. There was just something very friendly about the atmosphere here.

We decided to sit outside in the lovely courtyard-style area. However, in good old British style, the heavens soon opened so we were forced to move indoors. The layout is open plan, with tables and chairs set out for couples, families and large groups.

The food is pretty standard fare but as we found out it's also very tasty – and there's plenty of it.

As we were all sharing two starters, we decided on the marinated olives, homemade hummus and selection of breads, and deep-fried squid with a crispy chilli coating served with alioli dip. The platter came with plenty of warm pittas, and a tomato-based hummus,

The Green Room, close to Birmingham Hippodrome



which contained just enough garlic. The dish was plenty for us to all share and, when mixed with the tangy olives, the combined flavours were a delight. But the showstopper for me was the calamari.

Claire and Tom had just returned from a holiday in Portugal – and being lovers of fried squid, both agreed this was better than anything they'd eaten aboard. Quite a compliment seeing as they'd been staying in a fishing village by the sea. Again, there was a decent portion and when the hot fish was dunked in the alioli, we wished there was more. After Annabelle's homemade

Veggie delight – served with chips and coleslaw



Fish fingers – the crispy calamari



macaroni cheese (with an extra sausage) had been agreed on, we ordered our own mains. I opted for the 'quiche of the day', which turned out to be broccoli and stilton and served with a salad and rustic chips – chunky, soft on the inside and crispy out, they were delicious, and went really well with the light and fluffy quiche, which also had a delightfully crumbly base.

My brother fancied the falafel burger from the specials board and Claire the homemade vegetarian burger, which came with lettuce, beef tomato and relish – as well as chips, of course. Both said their burgers were

very tasty but particularly praised the relish with its tangy taste. Tom thought there was perhaps too much mint in his burger but the plates were empty at the end – even Annabelle enjoyed trying some of it.

As for her children's dish, it was a very large portion for her, so we all dug in. The mac and cheese was simple, but very nice. It also came with a soft drink.

There were plenty of classic desserts to choose from as well as a cream tea for two with tea or filter coffee. Next time you are in the second city, why not go Green? James Driver-Fisher

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MADEIRA WINTER SUN

Quote Code: KXL677

Selected Monday departures, October 2017 - April 2018

Madeira has everything - verdant forests, great mountains, hidden valleys, crystal waters, temperate climate, exotic flowers, culture, wildlife and food. Now you can have the perfect winter escape with this terrific value package staying at a quality 4 star hotel.

Price Includes...

- ✓ Return flight from Birmingham airport to Funchal*
- ✓ 7 nights at the 4 star Hotel Raga, Funchal
- ✓ Light all-inclusive: buffet-style breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus complimentary drinks with meals
- ✓ Afternoon tea/coffee with cake
- ✓ Airport taxes and return transfer to your hotel
- ✓ Services of an English-speaking representative

The advertised price is correct as of 12 July 2017 and is based upon departure from Birmingham airport on 11 December 2017.

View product online at www.omega-holidays.com/KXL677

8 days, by AIR from

£639^{pp}

Quote Code: GEE867



CYPRUS WINTER SUN

Selected Wednesday departures, November 2017 - March 2018

Gorgeous eastern Med island with beaches, forests, waterfalls, mountain villages, sea caves, vineyards, snow-capped peaks, fishing harbours and 10,000 years of World Heritage history. The perfect holiday away from the British winter.

Price Includes...

- ✓ Return flight from East Midlands airport to Paphos*
- ✓ 7 nights at the 3 star Dionysos Central Hotel, Paphos with hot buffet English breakfast and buffet dinner
- ✓ Airport taxes and return transfer to the hotel
- ✓ Services of an English-speaking representative

View product online at
www.omega-holidays.com/GEE867

8 days, by AIR from

£629^{pp}

The advertised price is correct as of 12 July 2017 and is based upon departure from East Midlands airport on 29 November 2017.

*We have included the current flight price within the above package price. Should the cost of flights change the package price may vary. The final price will be confirmed to you at time of booking.

Quote Code: YCP083



MALTA & GOZO

Thursday departures, 14 September & 5 October 2017

Price Includes...

- ✓ Return flight from East Midlands airport to Malta*
- ✓ 7 nights half board at the 4 star db San Antonio Hotel and Spa, Għawra, St Paul's Bay
- ✓ Drinks with dinner
- ✓ Excursion to Gozo with lunch and return ferry crossing
- ✓ Excursion to Valletta, with lunch and admission to The Malta Experience
- ✓ Excursion to The Three Cities; Cospicua, Senglea and Vittoriosa, with lunch and a harbour cruise
- ✓ Airport taxes and return transfer to your hotel

View product online at
www.omega-holidays.com/YCP083

8 days, by AIR from

£939^{pp}

The advertised price is correct as of 12 July 2017 and is based upon departure from East Midlands airport on 5 October 2017.

For more information or to book, please call: **01902 902165**

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Three-bed semi-detached located in a popular area

Being superbly presented, 9 Woodhouse Way, Cradley Heath, is a modern three-bedroomed semi-detached house in a popular area.

Close to all amenities including shops, schools and public transport links, it is also within easy walking distance of Cradley Heath railway station.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £162,500.

Its accommodation briefly comprises of a lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms to the first floor and a bathroom. This home also has a detached garage, gas central heating and double glazing and delightful gardens.

In more detail the entrance hall has stairs off. The lounge is delightful, having a square bay window and an archway to the dining room, which in turn has French doors to the rear garden.

Being fitted with a range of units, the kitchen includes a fitted oven and hob with an extractor over, plumbing for an automatic washing machine, appliance space, double glazed window to rear garden, a door to the side and a walk-in pantry.

Upstairs, bedroom one has wardrobes and overlooks the frontage of the property.

The two remaining bedrooms have views of the rear garden.

The bathroom has a suite of a bath with a shower attachment, a wash hand basin and a low level WC.

Outside, the property has a lawned front garden with a paved pathway leading to the front door.

A long driveway leads to the garage, which has power and light.

Moving house can be a stressful experience but Hicks Hadley aim to make the process of letting, renting, selling or buying your property as smooth and hassle free as possible. Communication is key to achieving this so they keep you informed at every step.

CRADLEY HEATH £162,500



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

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EMAIL: sales@hickshadley.com

KEY FEATURES

Superbly presented
Modern semi-detached
3 bedrooms
Popular area
Detached garage



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COSELEY, Hospital Lane

Gas centrally heated, double glazed detached SCREENED from road behind gated driveway approach comprising, cloakroom, hall, sitting room, lounge with doors through to HEATED SWIMMING POOL (in conservatory), dining room, kitchen, utility room, toilet. Landing, THREE DOUBLE & One Single Bedrooms. (one with shower room en suite), bathroom. Boarded roof space/games roo. Double garage, grounds. EPC:TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£465,000**



SEDGLEY, Chevening Close (Off Richmond Road)

FIRST QUALITY detached family home with FOUR GENEROUS BEDROOMS within walking distance of Bull Ring. Presented in exemplary order throughout an extended, gas centrally heated, double glazed family home comprising; hallway, lounge, dining room, refitted kitchen (with various appliances), pantry, utility room, cloakroom. Four double bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, extensive driveway, garden. EPC: C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£265,000**



SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED, centrally heated (combi boiler) double glazed THREE DOUBLE BEDROOM detached within walking distance of many amenities and with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS to the rear comprising; entrance vestibule, hall, walk in store, extended L shape through living/ dining room, extended kitchen, utility room, cloakroom. THREE DOUBLE BEDROOMS, luxurious bathroom. Garage, gardens. EPC C SEDGLEY

New price

WAS £279,950, NOW £255,000



COSELEY, Berrington Drive

Fantastically presented semi-detached property situated on good-sized corner plot in a cul-de-sac location. Having a TWO STOREY EXTENSION, gas central heating & double glazing, this property also boasts; porch, hallway, guest W/C, living room, dining room, kitchen-diner, FOUR BEDROOMS, bathroom, garage, parking as well as delightful rear and side gardens. NO UPWARD CHAIN. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£204,950**



KINGSWINFORM, Standhills Road

A IMPRESSIVE DETACHED BUNGALOW close to amenities, offering a GENEROUS layout which is BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED with a Large 20ft plus Lounge/ Diner, Breakfast Kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS and a WET ROOM. With DRIVEWAY, SIDE STORE and a large rear garden. EPC D. NO UPWARD CHAIN.

New price

Offers in the Region Of **£199,950**



SEDGLEY, Eastleigh, Northway

Conscientiously maintained, gas centrally heated (combi boiler) & double glazed semi detached upon slightly wider than average plot in favoured district comprising; entrance porch, reception hall, 25 ft through living/ dining room with bay & patio doors out to garden, kitchen, utility room. Three bedrooms, reappointed shower room. Garage, Sheltered rear garden. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£179,950**



SEDGLEY, Monument Lane

Located in the popular Sedgley area of Dudley and offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN, this semi-detached property boasts entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, utility room, sitting room/ study, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, drive to front and enclosed rear garden. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. EPC: C SEDGLEY

WAS £134,950, NOW £129,950



SEDGLEY, Dudley Road

REMARKABLY SPACIOUS - Extensive accommodation over THREE FLOORS - a significance modernised, gas centrally heated, double glazed mid terrace within walking distance of so many amenities comprising lounge, store, dining room, refitted kitchen; two generous bedrooms, bathroom with white suite (whirlpool bath); dormer double bedroom, gardens. Personal inspection vital for full appreciation. EPC E. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£117,950**



TIPTON, Silverthorne Avenue, Foxyards

FOR IMPROVEMENT. Double glazed majority gas centrally heated (combi boiler) semi-detached briefly comprising; porch, inner hall, lounge, dining room, verendah, kitchen, utility room, toilet. Two/three bedrooms, shower room, Garage, garden, block paved drive. No Upward Chain. MINING SEARCH AVAILABLE. ●●BEST & FINAL OFFERS TO RECEIVED BY MIDDAY ON FRIDAY 21ST JULY 2017●● EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£110,000**



DUDLEY, Wilmot Gardens

MAGNIFICENT GARDEN with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS - Just imagine sitting on the far patio watching the sun set! SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached in 'cul-de-sac' comprising; hall, cloaks, lounge, dining room, kitchen with 'Old English white' finish units, store. Four bedrooms (principal bedroom with shower room en suite), bathroom. Garage, landscaped rear garden, block paved foregarden. EPC: E. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £240,000



DUDLEY, Ripley Grove

Stylish, VACANT, gas centrally heated, double glazed FOUR BEDROOM detached on corner plot with many 'extras' comprising; hall, cloakroom, 18 ft lounge & a well equipped 'hub of the house; dining kitchen with a fine range of 'high gloss magnolia' finish units. Four bedrooms (principal bedroom with built in wardrobes & a shower room en suite), bathroom (chrome detailing. Gardens, GARAGE. Intruder alarm. EPC:TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £227,000



WOODSETTON, Wansbeck Walk

Located on the extremely well regarded 'Poplars' development in Woodsetton, this DETACHED property benefits from, central heating and double glazing as well as boasting; porch, hall, guest W/C, Living room, dining room, kitchen, utility room, sitting room/ family room, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, enclosed rear garden and parking to front. Viewing essential. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £204,950



DUDLEY, Bordeaux Close, Milking Bank

ENVIABLY SITUATED at head of favoured cul-de-sac with superb views towards adopted/wooded opens space. An EXTENDED, significantly improved, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached in exemplary order throughout providing; entrance hallway, lounge, breakfast kitchen, store, and a through dining room (or playroom or study etc.) Two bedrooms, bathroom. gardens. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £153,000



LOWER GORNAL, Lake Street

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL! - Highly individual 'quirky' double glazed gas centrally heated (recent combi boiler) link-detached upon wide plot (with garage) and lengthy rear garden comprising; entrance vestibule, living room, lobby, cloakroom, pantry, kitchen. Two large bedrooms (possibilities of sub division?), bathroom. Delightful garden and 16ft width from side gable to boundary wall with gated access. EPC: E SEDGLEY.

Offers in region of £140,000



LANESFIELD, Ward Grove

ABSOLUTELY TRANSFORMED! - Fully modernised, gas centrally heated (combi boiler) double glazed semi-detached bungalow. Room arrangements have been reconfigured to provide a spacious kitchen, lounge, walk in store, two bedrooms (French doors out to the garden), shower room. block paved foregarden given ample space for parking and a garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £131,500



BILSTON, Alice Street

A well-proportioned modern ground floor apartment located within walking distance of Bilston centre. As well as having double glazing and secure gated parking this ideal first time buyer property/ bungalow alternative also boasts; large hallway, living room, kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS with ENSUITE to master, bathroom and heating. Viewing is highly recommended. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £94,950



KINGSWINFORD, Buckingham Grove

A LARGE TWO BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR FLAT superbly placed, within the much sought after Valley Fields with PARKING for FOUR CAR plus SUBSTANTIAL SIDE STORE, all enhancing the GENEROUS layout, which is BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED throughout. EPC D

New price

£94,950



SEDGLEY, Viewfield Crescent

NO UPWARD CHAIN, A superbly presented ground floor apartment located in the popular area of Sedgley, Dudley. This One bedroom property comprises of entrance hall, well-appointed living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom, parking and garage available. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £79,950

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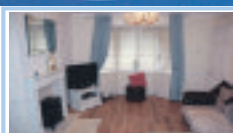
NEW

NO UPWARD CHAIN

23 NASH LANE, BELBROUGHTON

£210,000

- Modern two bedroom home
- Situated close to the centre of Belbroughton
- Gas central heating and double glazed
- Ideal for first time buyers or someone looking to 'downsize'
- EPC RATING D



'FAIRHAVEN' SUMMIT PLACE, GORNAL WOOD

O/A £184,950

- Well presented two bedroom detached bungalow
- Upvc sealed unit double glazing & gas central heating
- Dining area with fitted bench seating
- Attached garage
- EPC RATING D



NEW

85 HORACE STREET

£119,950

- COSELEY**
- Modern end of terrace house
 - Two bedrooms
 - Well proportioned accommodation
 - Ample off road parking
 - EPC RATING C

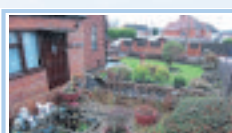


NO UPWARD CHAIN

81 NEW STREET, GORNAL WOOD

O/A £174,950

- Traditional style detached house
- Extended three bedroom accommodation
- Potential for further enhancement
- Occupying a wide road frontage with ample off road parking
- EPC RATING E



NO UPWARD CHAIN

26 OLD PARK ROAD, DUDLEY

£149,950

- Traditional style semi detached house
- Improved & extended three bedroom accommodation
- Ample off road parking & good sized easily maintainable rear garden
- Through living room with two separate living areas, extended kitchen
- EPC RATING D



NO UPWARD CHAIN

**7 REDWOOD AVENUE
DUDLEY**

£129,995

- Semi detached house
- Well proportioned accommodation
- Three bedrooms
- Occupying a pleasant & convenient location
- 'L' shaped rear garden
- EPC RATING E

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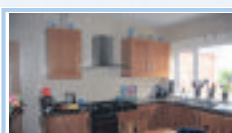


NEW

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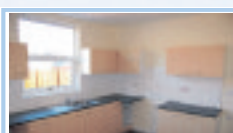


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MG Motors bucks new car sales trend

While the UK's new car market is beginning to feel the effects of a challenging political and economic climate, Longbridge-based MG Motor UK is seeing a five per cent increase in year-to-date sales figures, according to the latest data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

The SMMT figures highlight that new car sales in the first half of 2017 declined by over one per cent over the past six months. However, MG continues to show strong year-to-date growth, thanks largely to the roll-out of MG3 and MG GS models and the expansion of its dealer network.

Fastest

With more than 77 dealers now retailing under the MG brand, represented by large and small groups as well as quality independents, the brand is one of the fastest growing in the UK. MG is committed to growing the network even more throughout the rest of 2017 by attracting progressive dealers that are passionate about driving the MG brand value of honestly priced vehicles. With engaged dealers delivering great service, MG Motor UK expects to have close to 90 dealers in place by the end of 2017.

Matthew Cheyne, head of sales and marketing at MG Motor UK, comments: "Our straightforward approach to franchising and low cost of set-up appeals to forward-thinking dealers that want to be part of a dynamic and successful organisation."

"Thanks to the commitment and passion of our dealers, we continue to buck the trend on new car registrations. Well-equipped, well-designed and well-priced, our models are proving an attractive proposition for dealers and customers alike."



MG3 is cheapest car on Motability scheme

"We increased our figures by almost 33% from 2015 to 2016 and are already tracking 5.12% up again this year. We are aiming to push figures even higher this year, thanks to continued penetration of the MG3 and MG GS and the launch of the much-anticipated MG XS."

For more information about the full-range of MG models, visit: www.mg.co.uk

MG Motor UK's stylish Supermini, the MG3, has reclaimed its top spot as the lowest priced car on the Motability Scheme, meaning you could drive away a brand-new MG3 Form Sport with DAB radio, cruise control and smartphone integration for just £48.25 a week.

This offer is available to people on the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMC DLA), the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (ERMC PIP) or the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) schemes. In addition, the MG3 Form Sport can be leased at a similarly competitive rate for people on the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS).



MG continues to show strong year-to-date growth in a challenging political and economic climate

Priced over a three-year fixed lease agreement, the MG3 costs less than the total mobility allowance, which means the remainder of your allowance will be paid directly to you by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This equates to almost £1,404 in savings over the three-year period, which can be used towards fuel and parking.

The MG3 Form Sport comes packed full of features including a leather sport steering wheel, Bluetooth, 16" alloy-wheels and six

speakers as standard. The worry-free lease also includes insurance for two named drivers, servicing, maintenance and full breakdown assistance from the RAC. If adaptations are required, many of these are available at no additional cost too.

Matthew Cheyne, said: "Nearly two thirds of MG dealerships have a Motability-trained specialist who can provide expert advice to customers and the number is growing. We believe the Motability Scheme is a great

initiative and we are proud to once again be in the top spot."

Awarded 4.5 out of 5 stars by AA Cars, the MG3 was praised for coming with many features other manufacturers would charge for. Economical, with good acceleration and an excellent driving position, there's a lot to love about the stylish MG3.

For more information about the Motability Scheme, or to book a test drive, visit: www.mg.co.uk/motability/

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MG3 fuel consumption: URBAN 41.7 mpg | 6.8 l/100km, EXTRA URBAN 59.6 mpg | 4.8 l/100km, COMBINED 51.5 mpg | 5.5 l/100km, CO2 Emissions: 124g/km. MG GS fuel consumption: URBAN 36.6 - 37.6 mpg | 7.7 - 7.5 l/100km, EXTRA URBAN 53.2 mpg | 5.3 l/100km, COMBINED 45.5 - 46.3 mpg | 6.2 - 6.1 l/100km, CO2 EMISSIONS 139 - 141 g/km.

MG GS Exclusive with metallic paint in Spiced Orange at £20,090 on the road (OTR) or from £234.38 a month based on a 60 month conditional sale agreement and MG3 3Style+ with metallic paint in Ruby Red with White Roof at £12,190.00 or from £162.53 a month based on a 60 month conditional sale agreement. †OTR price of £8,695 applies to the MG3 3Time with no optional extras and £15,095 applies to the MG GS Explore with no optional extras. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months "Vehicle Excise Duty". From prices exclude optional metallic paint, accessories and graphics packs. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply.

*0% APR: Conditional sale. 0% APR available on all MG3 and MG GS models until 30.09.2017. A minimum deposit of 20% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG3 models and 30% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG GS models. Finance by MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YT, subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over at participating dealers. See your local dealer or visit mg.co.uk/offers for details.

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Classy place to spend hours on road

By Ian Donaldson

When it comes to clinching the deal Vauxhall customers wants to see something for their money – and right there in the showroom works best.

So you'll quite likely be popped into the driver's seat of a new Insignia Sports Tourer and be asked to look straight ahead where, if the car has been specced right, you'll feel like a fighter pilot.

For a £290 option brings a head up display that pops speed and sat nav directions directly on to the windscreen, in your sightline and saving a distracting glance downward. Audi charges £900 for the same thing, by the way.

Wander round the rear of this new load lugger from Luton and you may find a biggish cardboard box in the boot, its 135 litres capacity being the precise increase in cargo capacity over the old Sport Tourer.

It's the sort of obvious, practical demonstration of a car's capabilities that, we're told by the men who know at Vauxhall, that makes people happy to sign on the dotted line.

Very sensible too; you may admire the looks of the new largest estate in the Vauxhall range – even spot its modest growth over the one before – but life with a car that will have to earn its living quickly boils down to practicalities.

The outgoing model wasn't quite practical enough, apparently. Too tight for legroom in the back, for starters. The new one stretches the distance between front and rear wheels to the benefit of rear seat passengers.

They now enjoy enough room for two six-footers to sit comfortably in tandem. Not quite the limo-like stretch of a Skoda Superb,

though, which is actually shorter than the new Insignia but in a class of its own in space terms.

The Skoda has the Vauxhall licked on boot room too and so does the VW Passat estate but a perhaps more direct competitor, Ford's Mondeo, is smaller in the luggage bay than the Insignia with back seat up or down.

Whatever the figures show you won't declare the new Vauxhall lacking in stowage space, and worth the £1,500 lift over the Grand Sport hatchback sibling.

Swallow

The great majority will be heading for life as a company car and there's surely ample room for all the paraphernalia that goes with it.

And at weekends when the family piles on board, the Sports Tourer will swallow all the football kit for the Second XI and still have space for pizzas on the way home.

Prices start at £18,685 for a Design version with a new 1.5 litre 140 horsepower petrol engine.

Not many will go for the entry level trim but Vauxhall thinks the current swing against diesel (warranted or not) might make this petrol model surprisingly popular.

For another £795 you move up to a Design Nav spec, perhaps essential for anyone who needs to know precisely how far away the next business meeting is and when they're going to get there.

You can have a car without sat nav in the next grade up – SRI – but you wonder how many will, with prices from £21,580 for a map enabled (petrol) version.

An SRI 1.6 litre 136 horsepower diesel (£23,240) tried over a mixed route on the

VAUXHALL INSIGNIA SPORTS TOURER, FROM £18,685



The new Insignia Tourer stretches the distance between front and rear wheels to the benefit of rear seat passengers

press launch showed 54mpg at the end in comparison to the 40mpg of the petrol car, which felt less lively too. Both rode well and felt a mostly classy place to while away hours on the road. There are plenty of cubbies and stowage places and a crisp, business-like feel to the way dials are drawn and switches placed.

As befits a car that must appeal to a multitude of company pecking orders, there

are plenty of engines to choose from, starting with two versions of the new 1.5 petrol (140 and 165PS) and five diesels in either 1.6 or 2.0 litres capacity and power outputs from 110 to 170PS.

A 2.0 litre petrol with 260 horsepower, automatic gears and all-wheel drive is waiting in the wings but its 199g/km and eye-watering £1,200 first year's road tax are likely to keep it a rare sight. The 112g/km and

£160 tax of the cleanest diesel will be a bigger pull in a market where practicalities still count.

Standard spec, or the options list, will provide Apple CarPlay and Android Auto phone integration, heated seats for outer rear passengers, powerful LED lights and even the ability to book a hotel by speaking to a real human as you drive along, via Vauxhall's OnStar service.

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Fiesta range are: urban 40.9-80.7 (6.9-3.5), extra urban 67.3-94.2 (4.2-3.0), combined 54.3-88.3 (5.2-3.2). Official CO₂ emissions 118-82g/km.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

*Promotion excludes KA+, Focus RS and Mustang. Test drive a Ford vehicle between the 1st July and 30th of August 2017 and receive an additional £500 customer saving (including VAT) off the Recommended On The Road price of selected new Ford cars or £500 customer saving (excluding VAT) off the Recommended Retail Price of any new Ford Commercial Vehicle, that are contracted and registered between 1st July and 30th August 2017. Promotion at T Wall Garages - Kingswinford. Promotion available to Retail, Privilege, Ambassador and eligible Fleet customers only. The £500 Customer Saving is in addition to all other existing promotions.

New look imminent to give Ford EcoSport a fresh look

The Ford EcoSport is to receive its most comprehensive facelift yet, giving the compact crossover with a fresh new look, improved quality and the option of four-wheel drive.

UK-bound EcoSports will also be made in Europe for the first time, with production moving from a plant in Chennai, India to Craiova in Romania in a bid to cut customer lead times and improve build quality.

Styling

It's likely that the look of the updated model will echo that of the US-market EcoSport – revealed at last year's LA motor show – with exterior styling closer to that of the Kuga and Edge, and interior elements such as an eight-inch touchscreen with Sync3 shared with the new Fiesta.

A Ford spokesman revealed that cars bound for the UK were likely to get some additional styling tweaks all of their own, too, with additional contrasting colour combinations and the illusion of a 'floating' roof thanks to colour-coordinated pillars.

It's hoped that the changes will address some of the shortcomings of the outgoing car, launched in 2014 and quickly facelifted earlier this year to not entirely universal acclaim.

Additionally, the changes will help distance EcoSport from the soon-to-be-launched Fiesta Active crossover – a standard Fiesta with raised ride height and additional plastic body cladding, if no increased off-roading ability.

"We think the customers are quite different," Ford of Europe



UK-bound EcoSports will be made in Europe for the first time

lead engineer for Fiesta Seamus McDermott explained. "So in the EcoSport, you've got the option of the all-wheel-drive coming out later as well, but the Active is

a different flavour of Fiesta. The EcoSport is more of an SUV, while the Active is more of a crossover, if you like. We're just giving the customers more choice."



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Superbikers roar to best ever race results

SNETTERTON was a weekend to remember for the region's British Superbike riders who either made the podium or posted their best ever results. Hednesford's Kurt Wigley put a disappointing round at Knockill behind him to post a fantastic eighth and sixth-place finishes.

The 21-year-old is now 15th in the table on 27 points. Josh Hiatt, 14, who lives just up the road from Wigley in Heath Hayes, also posted his best ever results in the British KTM Cup walking away with a 14th and 11th place finish, to sit 14th in the championship.

Brierley Hill-born Michael Rutter started from third place on the grid in the National Superstock 1000cc championships but lost his place off the line to Chrissy Rouse.

By lap three he had lost another spot to a flying Mason Law but by the 14th the 45-year-old had caught and passed Rouse and, on the final lap, went passed Richard Cooper to cross the line in third spot for another podium, keeping him third in the championship table.

Tournament praise handed out to girls

NEARLY 100 girls took part in the finals day at a first-of-its-kind handball tournament in Wolverhampton.

All the schools involved at Aldersley Stadium are part of the Cameron Homes Initiative, a three-year programme developed by the house builders. It has provided £45,000 to boost the sport and encourage girls to get involved.

Qualifying tournaments played in the West Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire involved more than 200 girls and provided winners from each region to compete at the finals at under 13 and under 15.

The under-15 tournament provided Newport Girls High School in Shropshire with a clear victory over Bishop Walsh of Sutton Coldfield, with Blessed Robert Sutton of Burton-on-Trent finishing third.

In a dramatic under-13 final, Newport Girls High School scored the winning goal with one minute remaining to beat Arthur Terry School of Aldridge.

Chase pays off as Boro bag Westwood

FORMER Wolverhampton Sporting hotshot Dan Westwood has been snapped up by Stafford Rangers. The Marston Road club ended a year-long chase for the prolific forward following its release from AFC Telford United.

Westwood, aged 26, caught the attention of plenty of non-league clubs with his goalscoring exploits for Sporting, of West Midlands Premier. He smashed 100 goals in just 72 games, and netted 60 last term before jumping up five divisions to join The Bucks in National League North.

The Wolverhampton-based teacher had little game time there and was told he could leave after former Hednesford Town boss Rob Smith was sacked and replaced by ex-Wolves coach Rob Edwards.

Westwood has dropped a division to join Evo-Stik Premier side Boro, who have also signed Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson and Tommy Cooney. Boss Neil Kitching said: "We have chased him for 12 months."

"As soon as we knew he was leaving Telford, we jumped at the chance to get him in."



Wolverhampton & Bilston's talented sprinter Ellis Greatrex



Olympic gold medallist Denise Lewis will join the celebrations

Golden girl on track to join anniversary bash

OLYMPIC champion Denise Lewis MBE will return 'home' to help Wolverhampton & Bilston Athletics Club celebrate their 50th anniversary.

Lewis heads a list of star-studded athletes who will turn out to mark the special occasion later this year.

The club where Lewis started her glittering career are hosting a glamorous dinner in September to mark the milestone with athletes past and present due to attend.

Lewis, who won heptathlon gold in the 2002 Olympics, will be joined by other famous athletes such as Sonia Lannaman, who won Olympic bronze in the 4x100m relay in Moscow, Jim Auckett and Stephen Pearson.

Aside from her gold in Sydney, Lewis, now aged 44, won bronze in the 1998 games in Atlanta, two silver medals in the World Championships, gold at the European Championships, two golds in the Commonwealth Games and gold and silver in the European Cup.

Other famous athletes to have worn the W&B vest include Don Holliday, Verona Barnard, Maureen Tranter, Rosemary Stirling, Mike Bull, Phil Lewis, Ralph Banthorpe, Kathy Cook and Gary Cook.

Club bosses said it would be great to have former members at the event, taking place on September 30 – who could inspire young athletes to bright careers.

Inspire

Club president Mary Harding, 65 from Coven, said: "Having the likes of Denise here and others will most definitely inspire future generations."

"Denise started out with us, and look what she has gone on to achieve."

"It is fantastic to be holding the event. There will be some big names who turn up."

Harding has been president of the club for almost 30 years. Before that she represented the club in hammer-throwing.

While W&B is marking its 50th anniversary, its roots go back for more than a century.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Jamie Brassington

"I am interested to meet some of the old people I used to train with. I don't think many people realise now how good we were."

A former version of the club was based at Molineux in 1914, where a track was located around the pitch.

A decade later, Wolverhampton Athletics Club was formed in 1924. Then it merged with Penn Harriers in 1943 to form Wolverhampton Harriers before moving to its current home in Aldersley in 1956.

It came to operate under its current name after Bilston was incorporated into Wolverhampton in 1967 in a reorganisation by local government.

This led Wolverhampton Harriers and Bilston Town Athletic Club merging to form Wolverhampton and Bilston Club.

It was once Great Britain's leading athletics club, winning the men's National League Division One from 1972 to 1982, and Men's National Cup final in 1976, 1977, 1979 and 1980.

It also represented Britain in the European Clubs Cup from 1976 to 1983.

The club has a number of upcoming talented athletes who bosses feel could have a successful future.

Hammer-throwing coach Stephen Pearson believes two of those are Phoebe Baggot, 15, and Molly Walsh 17. Phoebe has previously been a record-breaker during a national tournament involving schools from across the country. At the recent English Schools track & field championships in Birmingham, she reached the final and came third with a throw of 56.32m, ahead of club-mate Molly who was fourth with a distance of 53.15m.

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Pearson is backing new track plan

CRADLEY Heathens director Nigel Pearson says speedway is more environmentally friendly than ever before and is backing plans for a new track in Oldbury.

The Heathens Speedway Supporters Trust announced last week they had submitted a planning application to Sandwell MBC.

Pearson and fellow club bosses have been trying to secure a site for the past eight years but have faced constant setbacks.

He believes the Trust are making encouraging steps and has wished them well in their quest to give the world famous club their own home track for the first time since the closure of Dudley Wood back in 1995.

Pearson said: "A new home is all anyone has ever wanted during the time the Heathens have been back on track. I was delighted when I got the news an outline planning application had gone in. I've even stopped off to take a look at the site myself."

"People have to remember the sport is more environmentally friendly than it has been ever before. I like the fact they're referring to an acoustic barrier and the location being a natural bowl. They're making the right noises with those kinds of statements."

"It frustrates me that speedway has an image of being a loud, dirty sport when environmentally it's more friendly than it's ever been before. You'd find that the noise of 15 speedway races is less than that of the Birmingham New Road."

Meanwhile, Pearson is determined to see them bolster their Travel Plus National League play-off push on the track when they host Stoke at Monmore Green on Monday.

Jamie edged out in final of BDO Open

TIPTON darter Jamie Hughes reached the final of the Winnau BDO Wolverhampton Open on Sunday, but was beaten 6-2 by Scot Ross Montgomery.

The 31-year-old, who was born in West Bromwich, beat Graham Elvidge, Joshua Richardson, Nick Kenny from Wales, and Glen McGrandle from Scotland en route to the final at Wolverhampton Indoor Community Sports Centre on Racecourse Road. But Montgomery proved one step too far for the World Championship semi-finalist.

Telford's Ted Hankey, known as 'The Count', reached the second round of the 32-man tournament but lost to Kyle McIntyre.

On Saturday, reigning BDO world champion Glen Durrant won the Wolverhampton Classic, beating Liam Kelly 6-2 in the final. There were more than 130 entrants. For the first time this year, there were BDO ranking points up for grabs at the category B events, which had a total prize fund of £10,000.

Fighter flies Black Country flag in Ireland



Jee Johal and the contingent from Priory Park

JEE Johal kept up the gold rush for Priory Park Boxing Club at the Monkstown Box Cup in their second annual visit to Ireland.

He was one of a six-strong fighting squad from the Dudley-based gym that made the trip to compete at the open tournament.

They were joined by coaches Warren Davies, Peter Upton and Brian Gwilt at a competition

where they had enjoyed success the previous year.

Josh Jeavons, Connor Jones and James Mongan all won gold in 2016, but only Jeavons would be involved this time around.

Johal turned out to be the golden boy, with Jeavons and Kian Palmer settling for silver. Joe Gwilt, Ben Collins and Rahmatullah Sher were competitive.

Johal has come on leaps and bounds since switching from Wednesbury Boxing Club and has only lost once in Priory colours, that in a national semi-final.

That solitary defeat last year came after winning the West Midlands title in what is now becoming the England Boys and Girls Championships this year.

BOXER READY TO ROCK AGAIN

TOMMY Ghent has the boxing bug back and is ready to make up for lost time.

A talented amateur, Ghent turned pro in 2011 amid much fanfare. Plenty was expected of the Coseley boxer and a solid start was made as Ghent racked up five consecutive wins before falling out of love with the sport.

"Four years ago I lost interest in the sport and I just didn't really enjoy it anymore," said Ghent.

Four years on, Ghent was out with his brother - Richie - when the subject of a return was first mooted. A respected trainer in his own right, Richie convinced Tommy to make his way back to the boxing gym and 'The Rock 'n' Roller' hasn't looked back since.

"We were just discussing things and decided that we would join together and head down the gym that Monday and since then we have never looked back. It has been great since then and I am really enjoying myself."

Motivation

"I have my brother in my corner now and that has definitely impacted my return a lot and it gives me much more motivation with him being there. He pushes me more than anyone does."

"I feel really grateful to have my brother there supporting me. We have that close relationship and it is great to be able to go to war with him there. He knows me better than anyone else does and that is a massive benefit to me."

Ghent's journey restarts on Sunday when he appears on BCB Promotions' 'Sunday Best' show at the Copthorne Hotel in Dudley. Having signed a management contract with Errol Johnson, the 24-year-old is itching to get back in the ring and make up for lost time.

"I think I can be as impressive this time around. I feel a lot more mature now and that maturity will only improve me as a boxer."

Dudley's Ryan 'Tank' Aston, Old Hill's Manny Zaber and Kingswinford's Danny Ball also feature. Tickets on (01384) 482882.

Jordanne's fourth Wimbledon win



Wimbledone wonders - Jordanne Whiley, left, and Yui Kamiji, women's wheelchair doubles champions

HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley and Japan's Yui Kamiji recovered from a slow start to win the Wimbledon women's wheelchair doubles for a fourth successive year.

They secured a 2-6 6-3 6-0 victory over the Dutch pairing of Marjolien Buis and Diede de Groot.

Whiley, from Halesowen, who has brittle bone disease, has established a highly successful partnership with a player she describes as her 'bestie'.

It was Kamiji who hit the winning forehand down the centre of the court as Whiley joined men's doubles winners Gordon Reid and Alfie Hewett in being a home wheelchair champion.

Whiley, 25, said: "This is by far the most special to me because I've been out for eight months, struggling with injury. I haven't played with Yui for a year now, and I really did try my hardest."

Stourbridge FC fixtures 2017/18

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13	Matlock Town (H)
15	Stalybridge Celtic (A)
19	Coalville Town (A)
21	Whitby Town (A)
21	Nantwich Town (A)
26	Marine (H)
28	Rushall Olympic (A)
September	
4	Hednesford Town (H)
9	Stalybridge Celtic (A)
11	Nantwich Town (A)
19	Mickleover Sports (A)
23	Lancaster City (H)
26	Warrington Town (A)
30	Matlock Town (A)
October	
2	Coalville Town (H)
7	Halesowen Town (H)
10	Nantwich Town (A)
14	Altrincham (A)
21	Grantham Town (H)
31	Sutton Coldfield Town (A)
November	
4	Witton Albion (H)
18	Shaw Lane (A)
25	Buxton (H)
December	
2	Workington (A)
9	Farsley Celtic (H)
16	Ashton United (A)
23	Whitby Town (H)
26	Stafford Rangers (A)
30	Marine (A)
January	
1	Rushall Olympic (H)
6	Mickleover Sports (H)
13	Barwell (A)
20	Altrincham (H)
27	Grantham Town (A)
February	
3	Workington (H)
10	Witton Albion (A)
17	Shaw Lane (H)
24	Buxton (A)
March	
3	Sutton Coldfield Town (H)
17	Ashton United (H)
24	Farsley Celtic (A)
31	Halesowen Town (A)
April	
2	Stafford Rangers (H)
14	Hednesford Town (A)
21	Stalybridge Celtic (H)
28	Lancaster City (A)
	Warrington Town (H)

Nick fired up for Audi quattro cup

AMATEUR golfer Nick Adams from Dudley has won the first UK round of the Audi quattro Cup at The Warwickshire Golf & Country Club in Leek Wootton, Warwick.

Nick triumphed with a score of 40 points in an 18-hole tournament played under the Stableford format, representing his local centre, Birmingham Audi.

The Audi quattro Cup is the largest amateur golf tournament in the world. For the 2017 tournament, more than 2,000 players will tee up in various qualifiers across the UK. Almost 100,000 competitors in 51 other countries do so worldwide. If Nick qualifies from the regional final, he will compete in the UK final at Bowood Hotel & Golf Resort, Calne.

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Wolverhampton Grand Theatre is producing its first show in almost 40 years. Well known for hosting some of the biggest shows in theatre, The Grand is now making one of its own, bringing **BRASSED OFF** to the stage for 13 performances from Wednesday 23 August – Saturday 2 September.

Almost a year in the making and featuring a cast of over 60 actors and musicians, this ambitious project marks the beginning of a new creative era for the Grand. With opening night just a few weeks away, read the inside story from the voices that are making it happen.

THE PLAY

Based on a true story and adapted from the 1996 film starring Ewan McGregor, **BRASSED OFF** is a funny and life-affirming tale of community spirit and triumph in the face of adversity.

It's 1992, and Danny's lifelong ambition to lead the Grimley Colliery Band to the National Brass Band Competition at the Royal Albert Hall looks like it might finally happen. But as Grimley Pit faces closure, the future looks bleak as the town is thrown into conflict.

Flugelhorn player Gloria arrives in town bringing with her a renewed sense of hope and a touch of romance, but no-one knows who she's really playing for ...

CHIEF EXECUTIVE & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ADRIAN JACKSON

Following last summer's £1.2 million refurbishment, Adrian is turning his attention to producing and building a new and exciting future for the Grand on stage.

"I think it's really important for the Grand to produce. We've been bringing the best shows to the Midlands for many years – that's great but to actually create our own work for the people of Wolverhampton and beyond is terrific."

Adrian was keen to involve the local community in this production, casting local actors and musicians to play alongside household names including Jeffrey Holland, giving the production a real home grown feel.



PRODUCER & PROGRAMME MANAGER

TIM COLEGATE

From the day plans for **BRASSED OFF** were announced Tim has been hard at work keeping the project on track, from organising auditions to scheduling rehearsals, it's not been your average nine to five job, "There have been lots of aspects for me to look after and that's kept things interesting! It's great to see it all coming together now, nine months of emails and paperwork are all becoming real things. It's an extremely exciting time."



THE SCRIPT

WRITTEN BY PAUL ALLEN, ADAPTED FROM THE SCREENPLAY BY MARK HERMAN

Paul Allen partnered with the film's screenplay writer Mark Herman to adapt **BRASSED OFF** for the stage at the end of the 1990s. Ever since then he's seen the show go from success to success and is delighted that the Grand have chosen the play for their return to producing, he thinks audiences here are going to experience something very special, "The show has been successful and toured almost from the beginning... but in the more industrial regions where there have been strong mining links, such as the West Midlands where we find ourselves now, you get a very passionate response from the audience and lovely reactions."



#MADEINWOLVERHAMPTON #BRASSEDOFFWLW

Ash Matthews (centre) who plays **BRASSED OFF**'s narrator Shane, alongside members of the Community Ensemble

VICTORY
To The
Miners



THE MA BRAS OFF

KING OF BRASSED OFF

DIRECTOR

GARETH TUDOR PRICE

Enjoying a highly successful career directing at venues throughout the country, Gareth is tasked with bringing **BRASSED OFF's** script to life on stage, his passion for the play is evident, "I think what will make the production for me is the raw emotion of the story, the families and individual stories plus the power of a full brass band playing some fantastic music live on stage."

He's confident that his cast are ready to rise to the challenge, "What I love about theatre is that every live performance is different ... there's scope for a different reaction every night, and in **Brassed Off**, which is a highly emotional piece we should achieve that ... we've got a terrific cast to bring it to life."



SET & COSTUMES

JOHN BROOKING

With the director bringing the action to life, designer John is taking on the challenge of transforming the Grand's 123 year old stage into an authentic mining town. "My design needs to give the director a versatile space he could use for different locations but mainly to establish the terraces of a northern mining town. The dominant feature of the set is the colliery, the huge wheel is at the centre of the design."

As well as designing a set capable of housing a cast of over 60 actors and musicians, John is also responsible for finding costumes for each of them. Staying true to the era of the play, he has been on the hunt for authentic clothing from the 1990s, "You have to find costumes from the period which can now be collectible. You find as a designer you have to be a bit of a squirrel and collect things up! The problem you then have is having the perfect pair of size 5 shoes and then finding your actor is a size 4!"

Brassed Off Set Model - Design by John Brooking

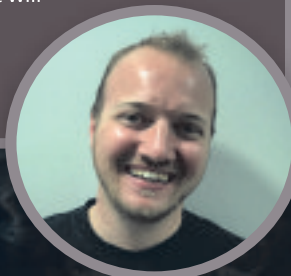


TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

ANTHONY ASTON

Many of **BRASSED OFF's** key technical roles are being filled by Grand Theatre staff, including Lighting Designer Anthony Aston, "As a receiving theatre we usually make other people's lighting work but now we're getting to work on our own ideas. It's a great challenge."

Adrian Jackson recognises the excitement these opportunities have generated among his colleagues, "It gives people here the chance to fully utilise their skills and there has been a definite excitement throughout the whole organisation at the thought of producing what will be a landmark production in the history of the Grand Theatre."



CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON BRASS BAND

Featuring some of Britain's finest brass band music, including *Death Or Glory*, *Jerusalem*, *William Tell Overture*, *Land of Hope and Glory* and *Danny Boy*, the Grand wanted to find a local band to step into the shoes of the cash strapped Grimley Colliery Band and perform the play's score live on stage. When they met with the City of Wolverhampton Brass Band everything seemed to fit perfectly.

Founded in 1972 and initially based at Wolverhampton Grammar school the only instruments the band had in their early days were those that belonged to its own members. So, they're no strangers to the hardships faced by the band they have been cast to play.

Now enjoying playing with the band in much happier times, veteran band member Rachael Dickens tells of the band's excitement at being involved in the play.

"As a band we're delighted to be performing on stage at the Grand, this is something we have never done before so it's a great experience that everyone is looking forward to. We're used to performing in front of audiences but never as part of a cast for a play so this is something new and exciting for us."



Members of the City of Wolverhampton Brass Band



#MADEINWOLVERHAMPTON #BRASSEDOFFWLTV

THE MAKING OF **BRASSED OFF**

THE ACTORS

To complement its professional creative and acting team, **BRASSED OFF** will feature actors from the local community, including 4 cast in principal roles and an ensemble of over 20.

Jeffrey Holland, Ash Matthews and Miriam Grace Edwards play three of **BRASSED OFF**'s central characters.

THE STAR **JEFFREY HOLLAND**

Jeffrey Holland is a long-time favourite of Grand Theatre audiences and plays curmudgeonly band leader Danny. Known for his comedy roles, Danny is a departure for Jeffrey, "It's nice for me to play Danny ... it's a very serious part and he's a very serious character.

His brass band is his life. I like to play a straight role when I get the opportunity. I'm known for my smile but I can't smile as Danny because he's a bit po-faced. I'll save the smile for the curtain call."

Keeping a straight face isn't the only challenge that Jeffrey will face in the role, how does he feel about conducting a live band? "I'm very excited ... to be conducting a brass band because I've never done that before. You always stand and conduct records at home and you think you can do it, but it's different when it's the real thing. I've got that pressure to look forward to!"

THE NEWCOMER **ASH MATTHEWS**

BRASSED OFF is giving a big break to young actor Ash Matthews, fresh from drama school he's taking on the role of Shane, the play's narrator, and Danny's grandson.

"Shane is such an interesting character and with **Brassed Off** there's so many different emotions you can explore - it's actually very funny but there are also moments of extreme sadness. People say it's such a special show to be part of anyway but this production will be moreso, with the community aspect and with how much this will mean to the Theatre and local people."

LEADING ACTRESS **MIRIAM GRACE EDWARDS**

Birmingham based professional actress Miriam plays Sandra, Shane's mom and Danny's daughter-in-law and a housewife on the brink of despair, struggling to keep her family together as her husband faces redundancy. Although telling the story of pit closures over twenty years ago she thinks **BRASSED OFF**'s themes are still relevant to today's audiences, "Oh absolutely, it was a huge thing that happened and really did change the shape of our country ... this was such an important thing to so many people, it was their livelihood and their work and I think it's something that we still see now, with the steel industry or ... factories closing down."

COMMUNITY ENSEMBLE ACTOR

JAMES CHAPLAIN

When 19 year old James heard the Grand were looking for local actors to join the cast of **BRASSED OFF** he didn't have far to walk to the audition, having worked as a Front of House Assistant there for the last two years. Having realised a love for acting while at school he knew it was an opportunity he couldn't pass up, "I spend a lot of time at the Theatre and this was a massive opportunity to make an appearance on the stage having spent so much time on the other side of it."

After a successful audition, James was selected for one of the community ensemble roles alongside two other Grand Theatre colleagues, Rachel Martin and Joy Davis. So, are there any nerves now the production is only weeks away?

"A few, but I'm really looking forward to it. It's going to be a great insight into the life of a professional actor and I feel very privileged that I'm getting to work alongside well-respected actors, it's a huge honour."



Grand Theatre staff Rachel Martin, James Chaplain and Joy Davis



Actors from the community Tim Jones (left) and Greg Yates (right) who play miners Harry and Jim

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